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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

SEPARATION, DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE AFFECTING ADOLESCENTS: A CRITICAL INCIDENTS APPROACH

by

DAN REILLY

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION

IN

COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

SPRING, 1989

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ISBN 0-315-52873-7

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DEGREE: MASTER OF EDUCATION

YEAR THIS DEGREE GRANTED: SPRING 1989

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled SEPARATION, DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE AFFECTING ADOLESCENTS: A CRITICAL INCIDENTS APPROACH

submitted by Dan Reilly

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

of Master of Education

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Date: April 20, 1989

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to those members of remarried families whose hope, courage, and hard work have enabled them to deal with their losses and to join in the building of new families. My hope is that we can recognize and further understand the unique qualities of remarried families as they have evolved in a society which is only now beginning to broaden its awareness and acceptance of this - one of its most prominent family models.

ABSTRACT

Recent documentation indicates that the establishment of remarried families has become increasingly prevalent in North American society. It is evident, therefore, that more needs to be learned about the particular conflicts, coping mechanisms, and adaptive qualities of these "new" families. As well, a heightened awareness and understanding of such families is required to enhance the work of helping professionals.

The purpose of this study, then, is to assist in the generation of that awareness by describing significant factors that contribute to the healthy and unhealthy functioning of children whose parents have separated, divorced and remarried. It utilizes a structured interview technique to elicit information regarding critical events. Based on an analysis of these events, themes are determined, described, and supported.

The themes of this study concentrate principally on the significance of dyadic relationships in disrupted and reconstructed families. Values have not been ascribed to themes; rather, critical incidents have simply been deemed either helpful or difficult regarding children's adjustments to family reshaping. Too, this study is unique in several other regards: for its emphasis on peer and sibling relationships; for its discussion of children's involvement in their parents' decision to remarry (including participation in the wedding ceremony); its treatment of matters financial associated with the separation period; and its noting of newly emergent traditions and rituals in remarried families.

Results of this study strongly support and are supported by previous research literature - literature which in some cases has been criticized for having a deviance base, being too narrow in scope and stemming from biased perspectives. This study, qualitative in nature, culls information from three teenagers, presently living in remarried families, and from their biological parents. As well, it investigates longitudinal adjustments through evolving family structure, relevant issues, and discusses their impact on adolescents - important, not least of all, for its implications in further research, parenting, and counselling.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Reflecting on the progress of this study from inception to completion, I grow in my appreciation for the efforts of those people who have supported my work. Very special gratitude is expressed to my loving family, Gail, Jay and Brie for their patience and encouragement. Also, a huge thank you to Dr. Don Sawatsky, my faculty advisor, for his expertise and guidance. His inspiration and constructive feedback served to illuminate the subject and to reinforce my confidence throughout the process. Further credit is extended to Dr. Lorette Woolsey for evaluating my pilot study and for encouraging the application of the critical incidents technique. I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Tom Maguire and Sister Therese Craig (Dr.) for serving on the evaluation committee and for offering their valuable recommendations.

I am especially grateful to Marianne Lynch for her meticulous care in preparing the text and to Myron Dearden for his proofing of the text. Special appreciation is felt for the members of the sample group who remain anonymous; an expression of their suffering and their growth has made this study both attainable and worthwhile.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The majority of remarried families are rooted in the divorce and remarriage of couples who have children from a previous marriage. The divorce/remarriage rate remaining constant, Visher & Visher (1985) predict that by 1990 single-parent and remarried households will outnumber nuclear family households. The remarried family has emerged as a normative family structure that needs to be better understood and accepted. Only recently have the basal characteristics of remarried family systems even been acknowledged. While much of this study validates the work of previous researchers, yet it also contributes much to the existing body of information on stepfamilies.

As a high school counsellor highly interested in the systemics of family evolution impacting teenagers, I am seeking to describe factors that contribute to the healthy and unhealthy functioning of children whose pathways to adolescence have been characterized by family reconstruction. My study is unique in that it looks at periods of separation-divorce and remarriage, and that it includes in its sample group not only teenagers themselves but, in each case, both of their divorced parents as well.

Through structured interviews, teenagers and their biological parents were asked to focus on critical incidents that occured throughout periods of family transformation. More specifically, biological parents and their teenage children were asked to recall and describe events perceived as significant during periods of

separation-divorce and remarriage. Subjects identified events occuring throughout their family's evolution that affected the functioning of children. It was believed that the critical incidents technique could effectively draw out behavioral data sufficient to comprise a valid study. This belief has been supported by Woolsey (1986), who has concluded that the technique provides a unique methodology for the development of counselling skills. The prospect, therefore, of enhancing my own counselling skills while conducting qualitative research has been a prime motivator for this thesis.

Focusing on the family change process, this thesis examines its impacts on adolescents. Considering the changes occuring in the traditional two-parent, father-supported family, counsellors and therapists need to broaden their knowledge and perceptions of family systems. As well, they will need to develop new intervention strategies for dealing with these families.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This review on separation - divorce and remarriage is focused on the changes resulting from these major family reconstructions. Particular emphasis is placed on the impact on children with the effects reported for parents and other family members as well. The literature is reviewed according to the two major periods of transition and the state of the research:

(A) Separation - Divorce

(B) Remarriage

(C) State of the Research

(A) SEPARATION AND DIVORCE

Schwartzberg (1980) claimed approximately one of six children under the age of eighteen experienced separation and divorce. Most studies considered the psychological consequences of the loss, children's attempts to adjust, developmental issues, the relationship between bereavement and delinquency, and identity problems. Schwartzberg (1980) elaborated on the views of Klein, Swift, and Kramer (1970) who described divorce as a process rather than an effect. Most researchers focused on children's reactions to parental separation and divorce; few considered adolescents (Kelly, 1981).

The most typical divorced family situation found children living with their mother and having intermittent or little contact with their father (Kelly, 1981, Wallerstein & Kelly, 1976, Wallerstein, 1985). Divorce has been found to create a major crisis in the lives of most children and adolescents, with boys affected more than girls with the major impact in the first two years following family dissolution

(Kelly, 1981, Hetherington, Cox & Cox, 1980, McGurk & Glachan,1987). In a data analysis of 400 children in an outpatient psychiatric population, twice as many children of divorce were seen as other children in the general population (Kalter, 1977).

Divorce involves a series of critical incidents effecting the entire family. The functioning and interaction of all family members has been altered by the absence of a stable ongoing family structure. The entire family system needs to be examined. With few exceptions, separation - divorce has been viewed as extremely stressful for the entire family. Parents faced a grave sense of loss; for some, this feeling declined with time, for others, it remained a continual concern (Hetherington et al, 1980).

Many children received less attention from their parents following separation and divorce. Many mothers went to work full-time and were less available; fathers were typically out of the household (Kelly & Wallerstein, 1979). Multiple stresses upon the mother contributed more to childrens' maladjustment than did the father's absence (Schwartzberg, 1980). Stressful factors included financial difficulty, social isolation and loneliness and discipline of children (Schwartzberg, 1980). Some children worried about their father's well-being and some increased their responsibilities in care of younger siblings and household chores (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1976, Wallerstein, 1985).

Divorce tended to push some children forward into precocious, preadolescent behaviors with increased independence from the family (Wynn & Brumberger, 1982, Schwartzberg, 1980, McGurk & Glachan, 1987). Wallerstein

& Kelly (1976) found a peculiar interdependence of parent-child relationships; some children formed a relationship with one parent specifically aimed at the exclusion of the other parent. In one study, ten families with a high degree of husband-wife conflict reported improved parent-child relationships following divorce (Hetherington et al, 1980). Divorced parents made fewer maturity demands, showed inconsistency in discipline and tended to be less affectionate than married parents (Hetherington, et al, 1980). The maintenance of positive affective bonds between adult and child was the key to preserving the continuity of parenthood following divorce (Wynn & Brumberger, 1982, McGurk & Glachan, 1987). A major change in parents' willingness or capacity to maintain generational distance and child rearing functions was noted by Wallerstein (1985). This diminished parenting led to decreased pleasure in the parent-child relationship and decreased attentiveness to children's needs and wishes. Wallerstein (1985) noted less talk, less play and a marked escalation in the inappropriate expression of anger. When parents remarried, younger children experienced less difficulty adjusting to a stepparent or stepsiblings; older children felt more deprived and felt jealous of stepsiblings living with their father (Kelly, 1981).

With the absence of the father from the household, many children were profoundly moved and yearned for his return (Kelly & Wallerstein, 1979, Wallerstein & Kelly, 1976). Boys were more affected by the loss of their fathers than girls (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1976). A very strong sense of loss for many children was accompanied by feelings of rejection and abandonment. Divorced fathers reported feeling shut out and rootless (Hetherington et al, 1980). Younger children experienced more difficulty appreciating the continuity of the parental relationship with the parent who left the home (McGurk & Glachan,1987).

Frequent availability of the father was associated with positive adjustment and social relationships, especially in boys (Kelly, 1981). Children whose fathers showed little interest in them became burdened by poor self-esteem, increased anger and in some cases, chronic depression (Kelly, 1981). Repeated disappointment because of infrequency or unreliability of father's visits or insensitivity of the father during visits caused children grave unhappiness that didn't appear to diminish over the years (Wallerstein, 1981).

Some boys expressed anger at their mothers for causing the divorce and driving their father away (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1976). Mothers who had special relationships with their sons reported improvement in the mother-child relationship (McGurk & Glachan, 1987). Practical problems related to a new lifestyle for divorced mothers and fathers were linked to household maintenance and economic and occupational difficulties (Hetherington et al, 1980). Most women felt gratification with employment outweighed the complaints of household and child care responsibilities (Hetherington et al, 1980).

Researchers have noted young peoples' increased independence and maturity in divorced family situations (Wallerstein, 1985). Children's adjustment was closely related to the overall quality of life in the post divorce family and the relationship with the custodial parent (Wallerstein, 1981). Children showed a sensitivity to their custodial parent's worries and responsibilities; they provided help in the household as well as companionship and encouraged the establishment of an independent circle of friends for their parents (Wallerstein, 1981).

Establishing satisfactory visiting relationships was more difficult than many

families expected and little help was available (Kelly, 1981). Although children with frequent visiting and close proximity to their fathers felt less hopeless and deprived than children with infrequent visiting, children in both situations complained about insufficient visiting (Kelly, 1981, Wallerstein & Kelly, 1976). Conflicted and ruined visits were common when parents used children to express their own intense anger (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1976, Wallerstein, 1981). Adolescents preferred spontaneous meetings with their fathers and were particularly content when they played an active role in determining the visiting pattern (Kelly, 1981).

Schwartzberg (1980) found as a recurrent theme a potential in the post divorce family for emotional and physical neglect of previously well-cared for children. Some children had a sense no one was in charge; older children complained of responsibility for younger siblings. More positively, sibling relationships provided protection from the pressure of parental needs and exposure to parental violence (Wallerstein, 1985).

Stress was consistent for divorced fathers and mothers; economic, social and psychological factors impinged uniquely on different people. While mothers complained of a loss of status and identity and general feelings of helplessness, fathers despaired over great feelings of loss and restlessness (Hetherington et al, 1980). Both fathers' and mothers' happiness, self-esteem and feelings of competency increased steadily over the two years following separation but even in the second year were not as high as those of married couples (Hetherington, et al, 1980). Intimacy in heterosexual relationships was instrumental in boosting divorced fathers and mothers overall sense of well-being.

Adolescents who coped best with parental divorce were those who demonstrated prior good ego strength and had a good relationship with their custodial parent. Wallerstein (1985) found children who were overburdened by parental divorce had continual difficulty sorting out reality because of the unavailability and unreliability of their parents. Preschool children were considered frightened by their own replaceability and the possible loss of the remaining parent (Wallerstein, 1977). Children of divorce may enter adulthood with grave concerns related to constancy versus disruption in human relationships (Wallerstein, 1981). More positively, some may make special efforts to make a well informed choice and work harder at their own marriage and family relationships.

Increased irritability was noted in children of all ages (Kelly & Wallerstein, 1979). Risks included psychiatric disturbance and unsatisfactory marriage relationships in adulthood (Schwartzberg, 1980). Wallerstein and Kelly (1976) found older latency children showed a greater capacity to grasp and to integrate the consequences of family disruption, although this same age group appeared ashamed of the divorce with the implied rejection of themselves as unlovable.

Lawyers have directly or indirectly promoted a lack of cooperation; often, little relationship exists between parents demands and children's actual needs (Kelly, 1981). Children needed reassurance that they were still loved and would not be abandoned (Kelly & Wallerstein, 1979). Central to some children's loneliness was a perception of divorce as a battle between their parents in which they were to take sides (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1976). Children who improved had parents who were able to maintain a separation between their anger at each other and their child's needs (Wallerstein, 1977, Hetherington et al, 1980). Kelly

(1981) found children responded with anger and bewilderment when parents were unable to distinguish their rage at their spouse from the needs of their child. In situations where divorce failed to bring an expected remedy, children were seriously hindered in their efforts at mastery (Wynn & Brumberger, 1982).

Children frequently perceived their parent's departure as a personal abandonment (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1976, McGurk & Glachan, 1987, Wallerstein & Kelly, 1976, Kelly & Wallerstein, 1979). They wondered whether their relationship with their father and mother would last, feeling like an unwelcome burden in their parents' lives (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1976, Wallerstein, 1985). Clinical literature has drawn attention to this fear of being abandoned and the importance of parents giving their children clear explanations and continuing love (McGurk & Glachan, 1987). Children and adolescents continued to feel hurt and rejected by infrequent and unpredictable visiting yet seemed unable to give up hope (Kelly, 1981). Many developed a self-concept that they were not worthy or uninteresting. Often the child's fears were well-founded; the adult consciously or unconsciously wished to abandon the child that coincided with a failed marriage and start fresh. This same adult exhibited a passionate attachment and dependence on the child (Wallerstein, 1985, Wallerstein, 1981). The diminished parental capacity is likely to overburden a significant number of children then unable to maintain their normal development.

Children of all ages hoped their parents would be reconciled and these hopes lasted much longer than researchers expected (Kelly & Wallerstein, 1979, Wallerstein & Kelly, 1976). In contrast, some children assumed responsibility for the divorce, but this was the exception (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1976). Clinging

to a fantasy reconciliation, children often exercised denial and lacked clarity in separating wishes from reality. Improved children had an ability to conceal painful feelings until they could be better dealt with (Wallerstein, 1977, Wallerstein & Kelly, Jan. 1976, Apr. 1976). Many children realistically perceived their parent's withdrawal as a lack of interest in themselves (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1976). Parents preoccupied with their own needs at the time sharply decreased the amount of time and attention they devoted to their children. Children maintained a strong loyalty to their father over the years, particularly the boys (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1976). Even in cases where the father was openly rejecting, children persisted in the fantasy of a satisfying father-child relationship.

In a study of children of divorce, Kelly & Wallerstein (1979) found the most common responses related to academic achievement. According to teacher reports, the majority of children had high levels of anxiety evidenced in unaccustomed restlessness. Other responses included severe difficulty concentrating on schoolwork, substantial increase in daydreaming, considerable depression, and significant decrease in academic achievement (Kelly & Wallerstein, 1979). Wallerstein (1985, 1981) reported children showed higher absenteeism, significantly lower academic and social competence at the school entry level, serious learning difficulties and disturbed relationships with peers. Contrastingly, in an earlier study, Wallerstein & Kelly (1976) saw no straightforward relationship between the intensity of a child's suffering at home and observable reactions to the divorce at school.

In some cases, children used school to express what they couldn't at home. School represented the most continuous institution in the lives of many children

(Kelly & Wallerstein, 1979, Wynn & Brumberger, 1982). Frequently, parents didn't understand the effects on their child's school performance and didn't inform teachers of the divorce. Kelly & Wallerstein (1979) suggested teachers be informed, so they could be as supportive as possible.

Children's responses to parental divorce changed significantly over time. Initial reactions included shock, disbelief, fear and anxiety, even when parents' marriages had been extremely unsatisfactory (Kelly & Wallerstein, 1979). Schwartzberg (1980) found adolescents initial reactions to divorce usually involved grief accompanied by guilt which later became shame coupled with resentment. An outstanding feature of adolescents was a feeling of abandonment by their family with an intense longing for an idealized family. Children in early latency felt a strong sense of deprivation accompanied by a need to fill the emptiness by fantasy. Children at this age were thought of as unable to utilize denial (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1976). Children in later latency (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1976) tended to be much angrier, particularly at the parent who initiated the divorce. Wallerstein (1977) reported regressive behavior in all children with intense reactions of fear, worry and profound sorrow.

Many children one year after divorce were functioning satisfactorily in both academic and social spheres (Kelly & Wallerstein, 1979, Schwartzberg, 1980, Wallerstein & Kelly, 1976, Wallerstein, 1977). Others, however, were in considerable trouble (Kelly & Wallerstein, 1979). Those who coped well were able to maintain distance from the parental crisis without impairing their capacity for empathy with at least one parent (Schwartzberg, 1980). Although some harbored reconciliation wishes, most had come to accept the divorce (Wallerstein & Kelly,

1976). Mother-son relationships were particularly problematic in divorced families, peaking one year after divorce and improving thereafter (Hetherington et al, 1980). Compared to children in intact families, children in divorced families were more dependent, disobedient, aggressive, whining, demanding and unaffectionate (Hetherington et al, 1980). Kelly (1981) found children whose parents had remarried by the time of first follow-up were able to adapt to their new stepparent without overwhelming conflict and maintained an attachment to their non-custodial parent.

Most families showed a decrease in negative feelings two years following divorce (Hetherington et al, 1980) but children remained profoundly affected by their father's disinterest or rejection (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1976). In a three year follow-up study of divorced families (Kelly, 1981) fortunate children were those who had fathers who not only loved them but committed themselves to continuing in a challenging and sometimes ambiguous role. Wallerstein (1985) reported love and hate, jealousy, blame, rage, humiliation and depression as dominant themes of divorce, sometimes temporary, sometimes lasting for years. A two year follow-up study which compared parents of divorced families with parents of intact families found divorced parents less satisfied with their lives (Hetherington, et al, 1980).

Wallerstein (1977) suggested all children struggled hard to understand their parents' divorce and to deal with the loss. Children who improved showed a good sense of reality discrimination and didn't seem to take the blame for the divorce (Wallerstein, 1977). Children seemed more able to maintain their own development when they understood the cause of the divorce, their parents maintained a committment to them and their parents benefited from the end of

conflict and a new beginning (Wallerstein, 1981).

(B) REMARRIAGE

More and more counsellors and therapists today are dealing with clients who are members of remarried families. Many remained unaware of the unique issues faced by remarried families and are not adequately trained to deal with their problems (Esses & Campbell, 1984).

Various terms have been applied to this revolutionary family form, including blended, stepfamily, reconstituted, and remarried.

Anderson & White (1986) defined the stepfamily as a domestic form in which one or both parents have children from a previous union living most of the time in the same household and formed when an adult marries a natural parent. A more flexible definition by Visher & Visher (1979) included families in which children from a previous marriage visit with their remarried parent and stepparent and families in which a couple is not married and children from a previous marriage either live in or visit the couple.

Researchers have raised concerns with definition of the stepfamily being based on that of a nuclear family. If the stepfamily was assumed to be abnormal by definition, it was seen as likely that the nuclear family will be used as a model for assessment and treatment. This model was discouraged as it failed to show characteristic forms of interaction and structure for functional stepfamilies. No family style was inherently normal or abnormal (Anderson & White, 1986).

The majority of stepfamilies are created with divorce and remarriage of adults with children from a previous marriage. With a marked increase in the divorce rates in the 1970's, the remarriage rate rose accordingly. U.S. figures indicated 80% of divorced men and 75% of divorced women remarry in four to five years following their divorce, with 60% having children from a previous marriage (Visher & Visher, 1985). If this rate continues, by 1990, the number of children living in a stepfamily may exceed seven million (Glick, 1980). More recently, Esses & Campbell (1984) estimated 10-15% of all families are stepfamilies with the majority being stepfather families.

The divorce rate has shown an unprecedented surge in the United States with 50% of first marriages ending in divorce and approximately 60% involving minor children (Glick, 1980). 40% of children born in the 1970's will spend some time living in both one parent households and stepfamily households (Crosbie-Burnett & Ahrons, 1985). Visher & Visher (1985) predicted: if this divorce/remarriage rate continues in the U.S., by 1990 there will be more single parent and stepparent households combined than biological family households. They estimated one of every four children under the age of eighteen in 1985 was a stepchild.

The growing recognition of the remarried family reflects an increasingly widespread phenomena with numerous implications for North American society. Esses & Campbell (1984) suggested "the stepfamily may become the most predominant family form of the future in North America" (p. 415). Clingempeel, Brand & Levoli (1984) supported this prediction; they suggested the stepfamily may prove to be the traditional American family of the next century. Visher &

Visher (1985) saw a similar trend in the United Kingdom.

Literature on stepfamilies consistently referred to structural differences that need to be recognized and accepted if this family type is to exist as a healthy place for children to grow and develop. Visher & Visher (1985) contended six major structural differences between remarried families and nuclear families exist:

1. The stepfamily is a family born of loss.
2. Stepfamily life cycles can be incongruent.
3. Children and adults in stepfamilies come together with many beliefs from the past.
4. In a stepfamily, parent-child relationships precede the couple relationship.
5. For children in a stepfamily, a biological parent is always elsewhere, either in reality or in memory.
6. Children in stepfamilies often go back and forth between two households.

In 1981, Sager et al saw as a major structural difference that in first marriage families, boundaries, rules, roles and tasks were more clearly defined. Remarried familes' boundaries were found to be more permeable, family membership open to interpretation, and roles, rules and tasks not as clearly understood. Walker & Messinger (1979) discovered less clarity in the roles of family members in a stepfamily; roles were thought of as being achieved rather than ascribed. As much as a stepparent might have aspired to the desired role of nurturer, provider, and authority figure, they will always to some extent be a non-parent (Esses & Campbell, 1984).

Potential problem areas for binuclear families particularly around the time of remarriage were cited by Crosbie-Burnett & Ahrons (1985). A couple's expectations preceding the remarriage may create a gap between fantasy and reality that results in problematic situations later.

The pivotal person in the stepfamily is the biological parent; he or she is the one most likely to be caught in the middle when spouses and children's needs conflict. Crosbie-Burnett & Ahrons (1985) stressed the significance of conflicting loyalties in remarried families especially during the initial adjustment after remarriage. They recommended each dyad spend one to one pleasurable time together away from the family members as well as the whole stepfamily planning and inventing new family traditions together. A common thread throughout the literature pointed to the complexity of the stepfamily structure (Visher & Visher, 1985). The number of interpersonal relationships are increased, often just the number of interactions itself can lead to stepfamily members feeling overwhelmed.

Anderson & White (1986) studied the similarities and differences between functional stepfamilies and functional nuclear families. They found both family types exhibited good marital adjustment, strong positive bonds between biological parent and child, disinclinations to exclude family members and an ability to make mutually compromised family decisions. Key differences showed less intense interpersonal involvement between stepfather and children and a stronger tendency towards natural parent-child coalitions in stepfamilies.

Stepfamily adjustment was viewed as a developmental process involving shifts in roles, boundaries, and tasks over time (McGoldrick & Carter, 1980). The

emotional process goes back to at least the disintegration of the first marriage. Variables that affected stepfamily functioning (Esses & Campbell, 1984) included the sex of the stepparent, whether the natural parent was previously married or not, the previous marital status of the stepparent and the ages and numbers of children.

Society's perceptions of the stepfamily were assumed to be quite negative (Esses & Campbell, 1984, Visher & Visher, 1979, 1985). Negative imagery evoked by early folklore and legends continue to be reinforced by contemporary literature and the media. The wicked stepmother as depicted in Cinderella projects a negative image that stepmothers have been known to try too hard to overcome and end up creating what they set out to avoid. Advice to stepparents is typically - go slowly. The stepfamily is unique with tasks to accomplish that individuals have had little preparation for or have not had appropriate models to follow (Visher & Visher, 1979). In order to overcome society's low consciousness in relation to remarried families, this emerging family structure needs to be better understood, recognized and accepted.

The boundaries that exist for remarried families needed to be permeable to facilitate the exchange of children, finances, and decision-making power (Walker & Messinger, 1979). Family roles and relationships were seen as not only ambiguous but in transition (Crosbie-Burnett & Ahrons, 1985). Interdependent cooperation was required to keep contact between spouses in harmony (Crosbie-Burnett & Ahrons, 1985). With boundaries blurred in the stepfamily situation, there is an increased chance that feelings of fear, guilt, and anger will affect communications. Compromise and negotiation are especially crucial in the major task of reorganization.

Challenges associated with a stepparent moving into a one parent household may involve feelings on the part of the children that it was the stepparent's fault their parents divorced. If the one parent household existed long after divorce, it likely had time to redefine roles and relationships and may be intensely cohesive.

The biological parent in the remarried family household was most crucial to the stepparent's psychological acceptance into the group (Crosbie-Burnett & Ahrons, 1985). They are in a position to model consideration or unconcern and can support or sabotage a stepparent's efforts towards inclusion. Children who held a significant responsibility in the single parent home, feared displacement and a loss of the status and power they had. Occasionally, these children were happily relieved of the responsibility and welcome the stepparent.

Overall findings indicated stepfathers lessen the degree of adverse effects of divorce at least for boys (Clingempeel et al, 1984). In specific studies, a positive effect was seen on the cognitive development of boys but not girls (Santrock, 1971); higher psychosocial adjustment for male college students from stepfather families and nuclear families (than from single parent families) was observed by Oshman & Manogevitz (1976). Stepparent-stepdaughter relationships in both stepmother and stepfather families appeared more problematic than stepparent-stepson relationships (Clingempeel et al, 1984). While boys may have welcomed a same sex parent figure, girls feared a stepfather will disrupt the mother-daughter bond (Hetherington, Cox & Cox, 1978). A remarriage may have constituted a greater threat to a girl's relationship with her noncustodial father (Hess & Camara, 1979). Problems underlying the relationship between a child and their noncustodial parent are associated with the fear of losing each other. The

movement of children between households can present problems for all with a lack of autonomy and control characterizing family life. Children were apt to feel like pawns caught in a war they wish were not even being fought (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980).

Remarrying couples overwhelmingly reported being unprepared for the complications of stepfamily living (Schlesinger, 1978). Visher & Visher (1979) supported this finding in a Canadian study in which remarried couples were surprised by how much they underestimated the emotional upheaval of their experience. No social prescriptions define the stepparent roles; family members often have contradictory expectations. The positive side of the ambiguity points to the flexibility to tailor the stepparent role to fit the unique needs of the stepfamily. The satisfaction with stepparent-stepchild relationship was considered more central to family happiness than was satisfaction with the marital relationship (Crosbie-Burnett & Ahrons, 1985).

It was important to establish friendship before a child will accept discipline from a stepparent, especially with older children. Stern (1978) reported that stepfathers who took on the discipline role with children too soon, without befriending them, had more difficulty integrating into the remarried system. Esses & Campbell (1984) estimated 1-1/2 to 2 years before stepfather-stepchild relationships stabilize. Hetherington et al (1985) concurred that the most successful stepfathers establish a positive relationship with children before taking an active role in discipline and decision-making.

No methodologically adequate studies have researched the

stepparent-stepchild relationship and child development in stepmother families (Clingempeel et al, 1984). Cultural and social biases have probably surrounded the stepmother role with fewer institutional guidelines and greater difficulties (Visher & Visher, 1979).

Divorced mothers and sons have much to gain from the addition of a responsible, authoritative stepfather who offers support to both mother and son. Divorced mothers and daughters have often formed close relationships that the intrusion of the stepfather may disrupt (Hetherington et al, 1985). Girls appear to show more long term problems in response to remarriage than they do in response to divorce. Visher & Visher (1979) found positive correlations between the degree of acceptance and understanding of biological parents and the healthy functioning of stepchildren. In agreement with other studies, divorce had more adverse, long-term effects on boys (Hetherington et al, 1985). Typically, boys expressed more impulsive, antisocial behavior while girls moved more towards withdrawal and depression. The negative life changes following divorce played a significant role in sustaining the development of behavior disorders in children. Most children experienced their parents' divorce as a stressful life event and exhibited short term developmental disruptions, emotional distress and behavior disorders (Hetherington et al, 1985).

Most of the available literature discusses children in general; very little points to adolescents. Visher & Visher (1985) reported that in reflection, teens in remarried families cited their greatest previous stress as when one parent verbally attacked the other. This could have occurred in the presence or absence of the other parent. Wearing (1984) encouraged the period of adolescence be looked at in

alternative ways. The assumption that the stable family comprised of one adult male breadwinner and one adult female nurturer has all the elements needed to socialize boys and girls for their adult roles and their identity in our society was regarded as no longer applicable (Wearing 1984).

Counsellors and therapists are encouraged to take on a facilitative role with stepfamilies, to be aware of their biases, to perceive all stepfamily members as individuals and help them see themselves as normal persons with normal feelings. Members of the remarried family needed a sense of self-efficacy in coping with chronic stress (Crosbie-Burnett & Ahrons, 1985). It was thought as important for society to accept the remarried family as a real and viable family form with characteristics that create challenges as well as rewards (Visher & Visher, 1979). Dealing with losses and transitions can help people cope with the shifts that occur throughout life and knowing interpersonal relationships that work can lead to rewarding and close personal ties. Children benefit from exposure to a realistic model for their own future adult relationships.

(C) THE STATE OF THE RESEARCH

Stepfamily research is at present in a very formative stage of development. Esses & Campbell (1984) criticized available research for using too small samples, subjectively designed tools, lack of published longitudinal studies and importantly, viewing the stepfamily as deviant in comparison to first marriage families. In addition to the methodological complexities of studying families generally, stepfamilies have presented researchers with numerous puzzles and challenges.

There was a need for more emphasis on the adaptation of the family as a

whole, the nature and quality of steprelationships, kinship methods of remarried families and longitudinal adjustment of individuals who remarry following divorce (Esses & Campbell, 1984). More needs to be learned regarding the positive coping of stepfamily members and factors associated with stepfamily success. Anderson & White (1986) recommended more research be made available for clinicians to evaluate functional and dysfunctional stepfamilies and theoretical literature from a structural family therapy perspective. In a comparison of clinical and empirical literature on children in stepfamilies Ganong & Coleman (1986) stated a concern that researchers and clinicians were professionally segregated with little communication between the groups. Similarities between researchers and clinicians existed in a shared deficit-comparison approach to the influence of family functioning or stepchildren's adjustment. Dissimilarities included the consideration of stepfamily complexity, data gathering methods, forms of interests, and conclusions drawn. Ganong & Coleman (1986) highlighted the importance of three ongoing research projects by clinicians Ahrons, Jacobson, and Clingempeel and Hetherington. Reviewers of literature described a scarcity of investigations of stepfamilies (Anderson & White, 1986, Clingempeel et al, 1984, Esses and Campbell, 1984, Visher and Visher, 1979).

Conversely, an appreciation of stepfamily research was reported with a proliferation of stepfamily research occuring in North America and the United Kingdom (Esses & Campbell, 1984, Visher & Visher, 1979). Only recently are the characteristics of remarried families are beginning to be acknowledged and studied.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

(A) CRITICAL INCIDENTS TECHNIQUE

This study employs the Critical Incidents Technique to describe the experiences of members of families who separated, divorced and remarried. The critical incidents technique applied simple interview procedures for collecting information from people about their direct observations of their own or others behavior (Woolsey, 1986). It has been used to develop ethical standards for psychologists, to measure task proficiency, to select and classify personnel, to design job procedures and equipment, to identify motivation and leadership attitudes and to identify factors in effective counselling (Flanagan, 1954). Since the 1950's, with the increased emphasis on quantification and experimentation in the social sciences, the critical incidents method fell into disuse (Woolsey, 1986).

Anderson and Nilsson (1964) described the critical incidents technique as an exploratory method which has been shown to be both reliable and valid in generating a comprehensive and detailed description of content. Woolsey (1986) concluded the critical incidents technique should contribute significantly to the development of a unique metholodology for the discipline of counselling.

In categorizing the incidents, a researcher looks for commonalities and emotional shifts as indicators of change. This study considers critical incidents cited by biological parents and teenage sons and daughters living in a remarried family household. As content coverage is central to this technique, all significant data for this study were elicited through audio taped transcribed interviews.

Esses & Campbell (1984) stressed the importance of a thorough intitial assessment when using information from interviews in stepfamily research. The effort for the researcher becomes largely one of systematizing, operationalizing and coding information collected.

The emphasis is on incidents (things which actually happened and were directly observed) which are critical (things which significantly affected the outcome) (Woolsey, 1986, p. 249).

Interviews in the study focused on teenagers and their biological parents' perceptions of critical events that occurred throughout the periods of separation, divorce and remarriage. Interviewees were asked to describe incidents that seemed helpful and incidents that seemed difficult. It was believed the critical incidents technique would facilitate an exploration of specific areas and significant positive and negative factors that effect the major reorganization of family dynamics and structure.

(B) PILOT STUDY

A pilot study was undertaken to test interview guidelines and determine the efficiency of the critical incidents technique in drawing out relevant and valid themes of separation - divorce and remarriage. The pilot study was evaluated and critiqued by Dr. Kerrie Pain, instructor of research design course at the graduate level, University of Alberta, Dr. Lorette Woolsey, recognized expert in the application of the critical incidents technique to human relations research, University of British Columbia and Dr. Don Sawatsky, thesis advisor, University of Alberta.

Evaluations of the pilot study by the above-named individuals supported the method as capable of obtaining valuable, clear data related to families who have experienced separation, divorce and remarriage. Evaluators concurred this application of critical incidents technique covered the content domain well; results were neither too abstract nor too concrete. Incidents were well described and tabled.

The following recommendations were made for the thesis study:

1. Interviews should begin by putting the subject back into the experience. The interview should remain focused and subjects should not be lead.

2. A therapeutic relationship should not be established with interviewees. The critical incidents technique is meant to be descriptive, to cover the content domain by collecting behavioral data for further analysis.

3. The interviewer should be alert and ready to respond to the need to make appropriate referrals for counselling.

4. Incidents should be noted in specific terms; if descriptions given are vague, the interviewer should probe further or seek examples. All incidents should fit a theme; some will be prototypical, others will lie on the periphery.

5. Interviews be continued to redundancy. In most cases, 2 to 3 interviews should be sufficient.

6. Commonalities and differences should be noted between teenagers and adults. Gender differences should also be reported.

7. Results be discussed in terms of support or contradiction of the literature in the area.

These recommendations were carefully considered and integrated into the thesis study. Positive feedback from evaluators was taken as encouragement to persevere in the topic area utilizing the critical incidents technique.

(C) SAMPLE GROUP

The sample group was comprised of three teenagers and their biological parents. Selection of subjects was based on responses to requests made to junior and senior high school counselors, clergy, and facilitators of programs for remarried families. Potential subjects were contacted to determine their willingness to be involved and to insure they met the criteria of the study. The following criteria had to be satisfied before subjects could become a part of the sample groups:

1. Teenagers had to be a member of a remarried family and be between the ages 13 to 17 at the time of the study.

2. Teenagers had to be a member of a remarried family for at least three years.

3. Teenagers had to be a member of a remarried family composed of a stepfather, biological mother and at least one teenager.

4. Both biological parents and the teenagers had to be in close enough proximity for successive personal interviews.

5. Teenagers and both of their biological parents had to consent to be involved in the study (signed consent forms were secured).

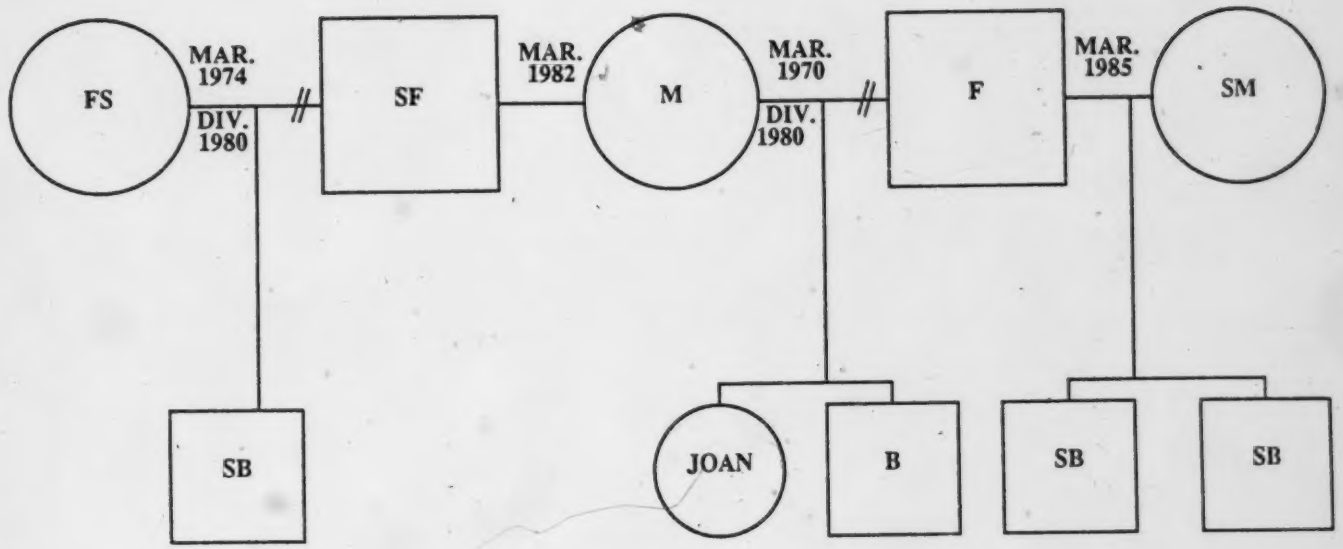
6. The sample group had to include teenagers of both sexes.

The sample group was comprised of nine subjects; three teenagers - one male, two females, their three biological mothers, and their three biological fathers. No stepparents were involved in the study.

Interestingly, all three teenagers in the study had only one biological sibling who happened to be of the opposite sex. This was not an intended criteria. The subjects were all middle class Caucasian, parents were all gainfully employed in stable, middle to high income occupations. This is a limitation of the study as other socioeconomic groups were not represented. Because the process of collecting a suitable sample group according to predetermined criteria proved lengthy and problematic, it was decided to accept this limitation and acknowledge it as part of the study.

Diagrams that describe the three remarried families in this study follow on Figures 1, 2 and 3; demographic information is provided on Figures 4, 5 and 6.

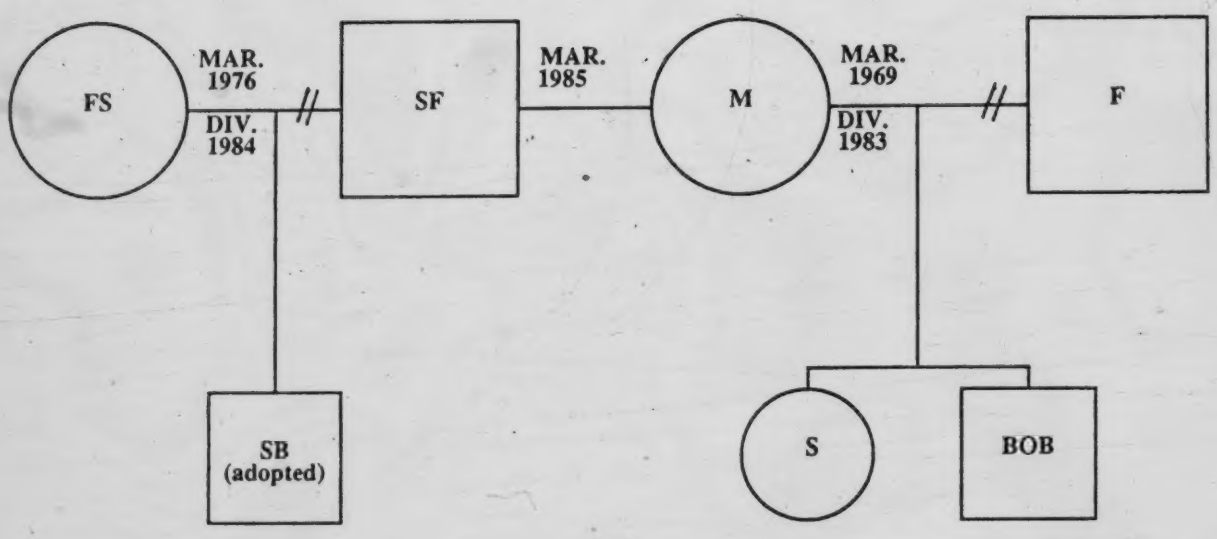
Figure 1. Genogram of Joan's binuclear family.



KEY:

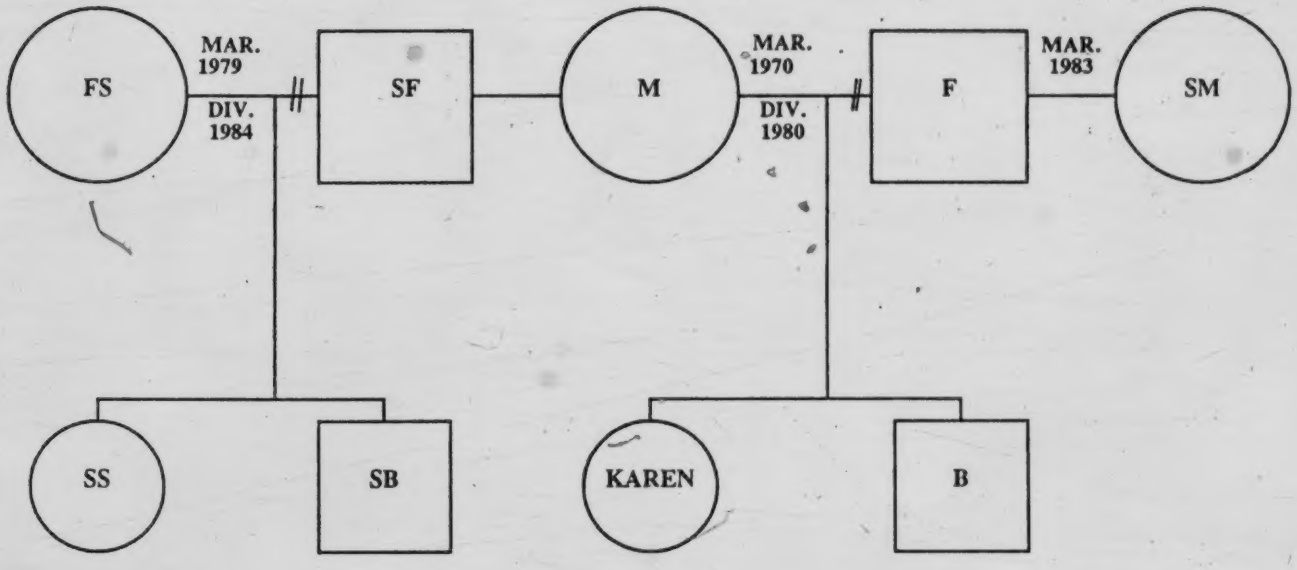
M	Mother
F	Father
SF	Stepfather
SM	Stepmother
FS	Former Spouse
B	Brother
S	Sister
SB	Stepbrother
SS	Stepsister

Figure 2. Genogram of Bob's binuclear family.



KEY:		
	M	Mother
	F	Father
	SF	Stepfather
	SM	Stepmother
	FS	Former Spouse
	B	Brother
	S	Sister
	SB	Stepbrother
	SS	Stepsister

Figure 3. Genogram of Karen's binuclear family.



KEY:		
	M	Mother
	F	Father
	SF	Stepfather
	SM	Stepmother
	FS	Former Spouse
	B	Brother
	S	Sister
	SB	Stepbrother
	SS	Stepsister

Figure 4. **DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

On Teenagers in Remarried Families

Assumed Name: Joan

Sex: Female

Age: 16

Age at time of parents' separation: 4

Age at time of parents' divorce: 8

Age at time of mother's remarriage: 10

Age at time of father's remarriage: 14

Mother's occupation: College Instructor

Mother's educational level: Undergraduate University Degree

Father's occupation: School Teacher

Father's educational level: Undergraduate University Degree

Siblings: One brother, age: 18

Figure 5. **DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

On Teenagers in Remarried Families

Assumed Name: Bob

Sex: Male

Age: 16

Age at time of parents' separation: 9

Age at time of parents' divorce: 11

Age at time of mother's remarriage: 13

Age at time of father's remarriage: Father not remarried

Mother's occupation: Office manager

Mother's educational level: College Diploma

Father's occupation: Government Administrator

Father's educational level: College Diploma

Siblings: One sister, age: 16

Figure 6. **DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

On Teenagers in Remarried Families

Assumed Name: Karen

Sex: Female

Age: 17

Age at time of parents' separation: 6

Age at time of parents' divorce: 9

Age at time of mother's remarriage: 14

Age at time of father's remarriage: 13

Mother's occupation: Social Worker

Mother's educational level: Undergraduate University Degree

Father's occupation: Manager, Agricultural Equipment Co.

Father's educational level: Grade Ten

Siblings: One brother, age: 14

(D) PROCEDURE

The pilot study involved one teenage male and his biological parents. Interview guidelines were developed through successive revisions based on consultations with thesis advisor, Dr. Don Sawatsky and acknowledged critical incident technique expert, Dr. Lorette Woolsey. Interview guidelines are included as Appendix A.

Selection of subjects proved both difficult and time-consuming. In selecting subjects, the hardest criteria to satisfy was having to work with both biological parents. Often, fathers were too removed geographically to conduct personal interviews; some mothers refused to be involved in the study if their ex-husband was to be as well. In the writer's opinion, this stemmed from strong unresolved resentments, indicating the couple had not yet divorced psychologically.

The parents who did meet the necessary criteria and volunteered to be a part of the study had established effective communication with each other over the years.

These parents recognized the need for clear communication with each other in order to meet their children's needs. Although this often involved conflict and exchange of negative words and feelings, communication between the divorced spouses was considered as vital to the well-being of their children.

RESEARCH STAGES

1. Subjects were interviewed according to structured guidelines (see Appendix A). Interviews were audiotaped. Interviews

continued until the information being obtained became redundant. This typically required three scheduled interviews with individual subjects.

2. Audiotapes of interviews were transcribed and protocols of each subject's interview were organized according to the assumed names of the teenagers; Karen, Bob and Joan.

3. Protocols were read through and tapes were listened to to identify critical incidents. Critical incidents were coded as helpful or difficult and pertaining to the period of separation - divorce or the period of remarriage. Protocols were coded by intitials; SD for separation - divorce, R for remarriage, D for difficult, and H for helpful, and numbered. As the critical incidents were being identified and coded, notes on potential themes related to individual incidents were compiled (see Appendix B for a sample coded protocol and Appendix C for a sample protocol analysis sheet).

4. Critical Incidents Tables Compiled

Critical incidents were pulled from the protocols and tabled for each individual in the sample group. Tables were designated according to difficult or helpful incidents and period of separation - divorce or remarriage (see Tables 1.1 to 3.12). Each critical incident was given a brief description to explain its difficulty or helpfulness.

5. Critical Incidents Verified

Appointments were made with Joan (assumed name) and her biological parents to verify their critical incidents. Each family member read through the tables and commented on the accuracy of description and categorization. Only minor changes were made at this stage; all of them pertained to the wording used. The categorizations were all considered accurate.

6. Themes Established

Each critical incident was examined at this stage. Notes compiled while coding showed some critical incidents fit certain themes explicitly, others required further thought and analysis. This stage involved an analysis of specific critical incidents leading to each incident assigned to a theme. A sample coded protocol and sample coded protocol analysis sheet is provided in Appendices B and C.

7. Themes Tabled

Themes tables were established according to the two major transitory periods. Themes fit either one or both periods of separation - divorce and remarriage and were priorized according to their strength based on the following three criteria in the order as listed:

1. The number of individuals who reported incidents that related to the theme.

2. The number of families that supported the theme.

3. The number of incidents that supported the theme (see Tables 2, 3, 4).

A brief summary table was compiled showing all themes, periods they related to and designation of incidents as helpful or difficult for the teen-ager (see table 5).

8. Themes Described

Each theme description details the basis of support for the theme. The general nature of the theme is mentioned. Commonalities and differences are noted and referenced to examples from described experiences of families and individuals in the sample group.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The findings of this study are presented in the tables that follow. A sample of Critical Incidents Interview results is presented in Table 1 (see Appendix D for results of all interviews with subjects of this study). Themes are classified according to the three periods of Separation - Divorce and Remarriage, Remarriage, and Separation - Divorce. Themes are listed in tables in order of priority according to these criteria:

1. Number of individuals who reported incidents that related to the theme.
2. Number of families that supported the theme.
3. Number of incidents that supported the theme.

Theme descriptions which follow theme tables elaborate on the strength of the theme, its characteristics, and illustrative examples.

Table 1
Sample

1.1 CRITICAL INCIDENTS INTERVIEW RESULTS
Teenage Female: Karen (assumed name)
Difficult Incidents - Separation - Divorce Period

Critical Incident	Description of Difficulty
1. Early visit with Dad. Suprised to see a woman there.	Expected Dad to be alone because he left us, should be punished. Considered it cheating, unfaithfulness.
2. Parents divided kitchen plates. Dad picked up his belongings.	Could feel the tension - the anger, pain and sadness all mixed together... so much pain. Made everything so final - felt like a death in the family.
3. Heard mom crying in her room.	Felt her pain, how hard it was for her.
4. Fight with mother shortly after divorce.	Seemed to be competing for places in mom and dad's eyes. Mom working nights - wanted more of her attention.
5. Moved to Edmonton.	Not in same city as dad anymore. Couldn't run over to see him. Felt like mom was pulling us away from dad. Created an emotional void.
6. Younger brother got sick and started crying at bus station on way to visit dad.	Always had to be in charge of brother. Was more responsible for him than I ever had been.
7. Had to decide which parent to spend Christmas with.	Torn between choosing.
8. Grade 9 Graduation. Expected dad to attend - he pulled out at the last minute.	Very disappointed, really distanced from dad emotionally. Quit relying on him. Stopped trying to please him.
9. Supposed to go fishing with dad - he cancelled at last minute.	Felt shot down, hurt, not wanting to try or care anymore.
10. Listened to younger brother's call to dad to ask him if he could come to live with him. Dad said: "No." Brother in a stupor afterwards.	Felt brother's pain and agony, being a boy really wanted to be close to dad. Angry at dad, felt distanced, resentful. Realized dad wasn't going to be there for me either.
11. Mom's first serious relationship with man since leaving dad.	Angry because I thought he was trying to replace my dad, trying to take my mom away from me.
12. Told parents of a friend in a very stable family unit that my parents were divorced.	Felt rejected, unworthy of being their child's friend. Felt like 'the different one.'

Table 2

Separation-Divorce and Remarriage Themes

	Theme Titles	No. Individuals	No. Families	Distribution of Family Members: Teens	Moms	Dads	No. Incidents	Dist. of Incidents: Difficult	Helpful
1	Amount of Contact with Father after Separation	8	3	3	2	3	41	23	18
2	Time Alone with One Parent	6	3	2	2	2	20	11	9
3	Fear of Abandonment	6	3	2	3	1	16	10	6
4	Parents' Involvement in Child's Favored Activities	6	3	1	3	2	17	3	14
5	Alienation from Society	5	3	2	3	1	18	11	7
6	Empathy Between Peers in Similiar Situations	5	3	3	3	0	11	1	10
7	Sibling Relationships	4	3	3	1	0	13	1	12
8	Desire for Parents to Reunite	4	3	0	2	2	6	4	2
9	Child's Concern for Parents' Well-Being	4	3	2	0	2	4	3	1
10	Expression of Repressed Emotion	4	2	1	2	1	9	3	6
11	Bonding between Mother and Child	4	2	1	2	1	6	4	2
12	Child's Increased Responsibility	3	2	0	2	1	11	3	8
13	Divorced Parents in Friendly Communication	2	2	0	1	1	1	0	1

Table 3

Remarriage Themes

	Theme Titles	No. Individual	No. Families	Distribution of Family Members: Teens	Moms	Dads	No. Incidents	Dist. of Incidents: Difficult	Helpful
1	Stepfather Initiates Friendship with Stepchildren	8	3	3	2	3	21	4	17
2	Loyalty to Father	6	3	3	2	1	9	6	3
3	Family Rituals and Traditions Established	5	3	2	2	1	9	5	4
4	Child's Involvement in Parent's Wedding	4	3	1	1	2	5	1	4
5	Relationship with Younger Stepsiblings	3	2	2	1	1	7	5	2
6	Child's Involvement in Parent's Decision to Remarry	3	2	2	1		5		5
7	Stepfather: Additional Adult Role Model for Child	2	2	2	1		5	2	3
8	Improved Financial Position in Remarried Family	2	2		2		2		2

	Table 4 Separation-Divorce Themes Theme Titles	No. Individual	No. Families	Distribution of Family Members			No. Incidents	Dist. of Incidents	
				Teens	Moms	Dads		Difficult	Helpful
1	Adjustment to Parents' Dating	6	3	1	3	2	20	12	8
2	Parents' Disagreements Over Financial Decisions	4	2	1	2	1	8	7	1
3	Custody Agreement: Access to Father	4	2	2		2	8	2	6
4	Adjustment to New Home and Community	4	2	1	2	1	6	3	3
5	Stability of Single Parent Household	3	3		3		4		4
6	Open Honest Discussions With Child	3	3		2	1	3	1	2
7	Exposure to Parents' Arguments	3	3	3			3	2	1
8	Child's Increased Independence	2	2	2			2		2

Table 5 Distribution of Incidents According to Period	Difficult Incidents	Helpful Incidents	Total
Separation-Divorce and Remarriage	77	96	173
Remarriage	23	40	63
Separation-Divorce	27	27	54
Total of all Incidents	127	163	290

THEME DESCRIPTIONS

SEPARATION-DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE PERIOD

1. Amount of Contact with Father After Separation.

This was the most strongly supported of all themes. It emerged for eight individuals (3 teens, 3 fathers and 2 mothers) and crossed all three families in the sample group. It was supported by 41 critical incidents - 23 difficult, 18 helpful.

Typically, children's contact with their fathers was reduced following their parents' separation. Two fathers reported they stayed away to avoid conflicts and to work out some of their own feelings of hurt. Also, irregularity and awkwardness of visits was apparent in these families; and efforts to arrange visits with set procedure led to power struggles between ex-spouses.

The quality of the time fathers and children spent together remained significant enough to maintain relationships at levels of closeness they had been before separation. With the absence of fathers in the home, it became apparent that continuous, unconditional support for children was vital. A constant, strong base of support was needed to let children know their fathers cared about them and would always "be there" though they no longer shared the same household.

Bob's father made a point of not pressuring his children to visit with him; he did not want them to feel they had to sacrifice other important activities in order to be with him. In both Bob's and Karen's case, their fathers were frequently absent before the time of marital separation. Their adjustments, therefore, to living

in a fatherless household were eased.

The loss of an adult male in the home seemed more critical for Bob, the male teenager in this study, than for the two teenage girls, Karen and Joan. Bob and his father had shared common interests. His father was, for instance, an active supporter of his involvement in hockey.

Minimizing the physical distance between her mother's and father's residences facilitated Joan's access to her father. Her parents decided to remain living in the same city until both Joan and her brother graduated from high school. Thus Joan felt less divided between her parents and more of a "normal kid." Both father and daughter remembered special outings and weekends as important opportunities to talk and to enjoy being together and each regarded them as emotionally healthy for Joan. Karen's contact with her father after separation was inconsistent and unpredictable. Karen and her mother expressed resentment over Karen's father not being there when he indicated he would be or cancelling agreed upon visits with his children at the last moment.

In two families, the father remarried. Children's initial adjustments were difficult; they feared their fathers wouldn't have time or attention for them anymore. In fact, though, fathers wanted their children to feel welcome and comfortable in their remarried households. Consequently, rules needed to be flexible to allow for a child to comfortably come and go as a non-resident member of the family.

2. Time Alone with One Parent.

This theme surfaced for six individuals (2 teens, 2 fathers and 2 mothers) and cut across all three families in the sample group. It was supported by 20 critical incidents - 11 difficult, 9 helpful.

Both parents and teens reflected on significant times when they were alone together. In same sex parent-child relationships, time together focused more on shared interests. In remarried situations, time alone with one parent remained important. Time with a parent while the stepparent was absent, for instance, was especially valued. One summer, Joan's mother and her two children went alone to the lake for two weeks. The stepfather made an occasional visit, but the majority of time was spent by the three original family members alone. Joan and her father also valued their time together when Joan's brother and stepmother were absent. It helped maintain a closeness in their relationship and allowed them time to stay well acquainted with each other.

3. Fear of Abandonment

This theme emerged for six individuals (2 teens, 1 father and 3 mothers) and cut across all three families in the sample group. It was supported by 16 critical incidents - 10 difficult, 6 helpful.

Following parental separation, children lived with the sense that someone vitally important to them was gone. For example, in one case, Joan's mother recalled walking with her daughter one day; anytime they separated, Joan would

grab her mother's hand and demand they stay close together physically. Custodial mothers worked at maintaining a predictable, highly committed relationship with their children. Children seemed to desire security in their home, to be confident their place was a solid one that wouldn't be abandoned for their parents' other desires and needs.

Different manifestations of the fear of abandonment were reported. In Bob's family, children's contact with their paternal grandparents was significantly reduced. The mother recalled times when it seemed important her children know they were equally cared for by members of the extended family. As a result, the relationship between the children and their maternal grandparents was intentionally strengthened. Adjustments to being left at a day care center and increased time with babysitters were reported as difficult for Joan. Her early reactions ranged from fear to rebellion. When Karen's mother began dating, Karen responded negatively, with feelings of fear and possessiveness.

A fear of abandonment characterized the remarriage period as well. Children feared being neglected as a result of their mother's devotion of time and attention to a new husband. Bob reported being afraid the second marriage wouldn't last. Joan was initially threatened by her stepmother's pregnancy - fearing she might be distanced yet further from her father, though these fears were subdued by her father's continued involvement in her favored activity, skiing. Karen developed a mistrust of men in general, fearing she would be abandoned for her mother's interest in the opposite sex.

4. Parents' Involvement in Child's Favored Activities

This theme emerged for six individuals (1 teen, 2 fathers and 3 mothers) and cut across all three families in the sample group. It was supported by 17 critical incidents - 3 difficult, 14 helpful.

Parents indicated that continuous support, encouragement and involvement in their children's favored activities helped them deal with both the period of separation-divorce and remarriage. All three teenagers in this study had one highly favored activity: Joan - skiing, Bob - hockey, and Karen - acting. Parents' involvement in these activities kept them connected with their children. The activities provided avenues for parents to offer recognition, to boost their sons' or daughters' self-worth, and to build a strong sense of identity.

Two fathers who sustained commitments to their children's favored activities felt it benefited their children by helping them realize they were not going to be abandoned by their father. He was still going to be there giving his time, attention and support. In Karen's family where the father didn't maintain continuous involvement or support, resentment and mistrust developed in the child.

5. Alienation from Society

This theme emerged for five individuals (2 teens, 1 father and 2 mothers) and cut across three families in the sample group. It was supported by 18 critical incidents - 11 difficult, 7 helpful.

Adjusting to living in a single parent family involved feelings of being different, incomplete, not normal. Karen refrained from bringing friends home to visit while living in a neighborhood of mostly nucleur families, though she was relieved to find peers living in divorced families. The perception of rejection by society, too, persisted into the remarriage period. Karen's and Joan's family members experienced difficulty with grade nine graduations. Karen felt hurt because her father didn't attend, and Joan was frustrated and felt slighted because she wasn't given enough tickets for both parents and stepparents.

As noted in the first Theme, Joan had the most contact with both her parents as they lived in close proximity to each other. Easy access facilitated visiting her father often, and freely coming and going in both her parents' households established a clear sense of having both a mother and a father. Karen reported difficulty with having a different last name than her mother and stepfather and awkwardness when introducing her stepsiblings to people surprised to meet previously unknown family members.

6. Empathy between Peers in Similar Situations

This theme emerged for five individuals (3 teens and 2 mothers) and cut across three families in the sample group. It was supported by 11 critical incidents - 1 difficult, 10 helpful.

Parents and children agreed that it helped to see other families experience separation. The teens in this study reported experiencing a sense of relief in being able to sympathize with other teens whose parents were divorcing. Having

experienced the pain of the separation-divorce period, these teens felt able to relate to peers going through a similar experience. Helping kindred others cope with their own adjustments seemed to increase self-esteem and reduce feelings of isolation and alienation. Friendships in general were markedly significant for all three teens in this study.

7. Sibling Relationships

This theme emerged for four individuals (3 teens and 1 mother) and cut across three families in the sample group. It was supported by 13 critical incidents - 1 difficult, 12 helpful.

All three families in the sample group included one brother and one sister. Although times of disagreement were reported, all teens reported an increased closeness with their brothers or sisters. They established support systems based on sympathy and consistency over time. There was comfort in knowing that their own relationships, at least, were not temporary or conditional. Sibling closeness, also, was maintained into the remarriage period. Teens in the study reported incidents with siblings that reflected caring and concern for one another. In Karen's case, she found it necessary to keep a protective eye and in certain situations to assert the needs of her younger brothers to their biological father. Friendships that evolved between siblings were regarded by teens and parents as relatively unique; indeed, the closeness between brothers and sisters seemed exceptional.

8. Desire for Parents to Reunite

This theme emerged for four individuals (2 fathers and 2 mothers) and cut across all three families in the sample group. It was supported by 6 critical incidents - 4 difficult, 2 helpful.

Interestingly, the theme surfaced in parents' interviews only - children made no mention of it. The intensity of children's desire for their parents to reunite varied. Joan's father commented that Joan thought her parents would re-unite up until the time of his remarriage, which was difficult for her to accept initially. In time, however, the remarriage helped Joan by reducing her feelings of uncertainty and anxiety.

Children found it difficult initially to accept the new situation of their parents dating. This was attributed by Joan's mother to the idea that it interfered with her child's desire for her parents to re-unite. Bob's parents' attempts at reconciliation didn't work and were reported to make the separation-divorce period more difficult for him. Karen seemed to benefit from kind, understanding reminders that their parents would not be together again and that they were both happier being apart.

9. Child's Concern for Parents' Well-Being

This theme emerged for four individuals (2 teens and 2 fathers) and cut across three families in the sample group. It was supported by 4 critical incidents - 3 difficult, 1 helpful.

Children worried about their parents' well-being. They wanted both parents to feel equally loved by them and to be happy.

Bob worried about his dad because he seemed so alone; he didn't want him to be sad and lonely. Bob's dad was actually dating at the time, but kept it confidential because he thought his children weren't ready to deal with it. Bob was happy his mother remarried; he was glad she had a partner. At the same time, though, as mentioned in the third theme, he was afraid her second marriage wouldn't last. Joan was concerned about her father remarrying because he would have to start all over again and would lose much of the freedom she knew he valued. She objected to him marrying such a young woman who wanted to start out like a young couple, to have babies and build a home.

10. Expression of Repressed Emotion

This theme emerged for four individuals (1 teen, 1 father and 2 mothers) and cut across two families in the sample group. It was supported by 9 critical incidents - 3 difficult, 6 helpful.

Children struggled with feelings of poor self-esteem and resentment over their family situations. Examples included family fights and temper tantrums. Bob's mother for instance regarded it as healthy when Bob and his stepfather started to argue instead of holding in their resentments. Karen's family found family meetings provided a constructive, healthy way to communicate individual family members' resentments and frustrations.

11. Bonding Between Mother and Child

This theme emerged for four individuals, (1 teen, 1 father and 2 mothers) and cut across two families in the sample group. It was supported by 6 critical incidents - 4 difficult, 2 helpful.

Bob, the only male teenager in this study, according to both of his parents, took on the man-of-the-house role prior to his mother's remarriage. His mother reported a particular argument which led to the realization that her son felt he needed to protect her. The man-of-the-house role was relinquished when Bob's mother remarried. Bob met his readjustment to the son role with mixed feelings - relieved but threatened at the same time, by the usurping father figure.

Karen's mom discovered herself confiding in her daughter as she would a friend, relating personal problems and difficulties she was having in relationships with men. It was important for her to learn from her daughter that this confidence was not welcomed. Karen didn't want to communicate on that level at that time in her life. Consequently, her mom refrained from sharing confidences of that nature with her daughter.

Children observed their mothers as single parents with increased independence as women. As a result, their sex role definitions and expectations were challenged. Bob's mother thought his closeness with her helped Bob learn about adulthood and the personal struggles women experience when marriages don't work out.

12. Child's Increased Responsibility

This theme emerged for three individuals (1 father, 2 mothers), and cut across two families in the sample group. It was supported by 11 critical incidents - 3 difficult, 8 helpful.

Children in single parent households reportedly grew up faster; with increased responsibilities, more adult-like roles were acquired. Household chores, meal preparation, child care duties were the most typical responsibilities mentioned. Life skills were learned as a result of increased duties.

At the time their children were entering adolescence, parents in this study perceived their families as being characterized by less discipline and more freedom compared to the average nuclear family. This led to increased individuation for Bob, especially when his mother remarried and he became less protective of her. All three teenagers appeared relatively independent in their decision-making related to their education, career, and personal relationships. It was apparent they were strongly supported while making decisions independently.

13. Divorced Parents in Friendly Communication

This theme emerged for two individuals (1 father, 1 mother), and cut across two families in the sample group. It was supported by 2 critical incidents - both helpful.

Children benefited by observing their parents engaged in mature, friendly

communication following separation and divorce. Observations included in-person and telephone conversations. Bob's mother thought open, friendly communication with her ex-husband helped Bob experience more of a normal family lifestyle. Also, he was able to see himself as a valued, important member of a larger group. Joan's dad described his friendship with his ex-wife as evolving positively, though patience was crucial to that process.

THEME DESCRIPTIONS

REMARRIAGE PERIOD

1. Stepfather Initiates a Friendship with Stepchildren

This theme emerged for eight individuals (3 teens, 3 fathers, 2 mothers), and crossed all three families in the sample group. It was supported by 21 critical incidents - 4 difficult, 17 helpful.

Adjustment to the remarried family structure was clearly marked by the addition of a new family member - a stepfather. The acceptance of a stepfather was easier when the stepfather worked towards a friendship relationship with his stepchildren rather than a parental one. Initially, when a clear boundary was established with the biological parent as the primary disciplinarian and the stepfather as a passive supporter, the adjustment was smoother.

When common interests were shared, it appeared easier for children to get to know, to like their stepfathers. Time was an important factor; the relationship needed freedom to grow from being friendly, and trusting towards more parent-like. In instances where stepfathers exercised a parent-role too early, they met with rebellion. Stepfathers were integrated more positively into the family when they left the disciplining of the children to their mothers.

Teens expressed happiness at seeing their mom with a companion. Bob , was glad to gain a male companion who shared his interests in sports and cars; he was also relieved to balance the number of females and males in his household.

Joan found it easier to accept her stepfather than her stepmother, but time alone with her stepmother preparing for her and Joan's father's wedding helped overcome blocks in their relationship.

2. Loyalty to Father

This theme emerged for six individuals (3 teens, 1 father, 2 mothers) and crossed all three families in the sample group. It was supported by 6 critical incidents - 4 difficult, 2 helpful.

All three teens expressed deep, longstanding loyalty to their fathers. Although contact with fathers varied, loyalty remained constant. Even in Karen's case, where contact was unreliable and sporadic, she maintained her loyalty to her biological father. At the time of remarriage, Bob was worried about his father's well-being and feared he might feel displaced. Bob rebelled adamantly against the suggestion he be adopted by his stepfather and clearly declared his loyalty to his father.

3. Family Rituals and Traditions Established

This theme emerged for five individuals (2 teens, 1 father, 2 mothers) and crossed all three families in the sample group. It was supported by 9 critical incidents - 5 difficult, 4 helpful.

Adapting to a restructured family involved changes in lifestyle for all family members. Flexible rules and boundaries were needed. As some traditions were

lost, new ones took their place. Traditions centered around family celebrations like holidays, Christmas, birthdays and graduations.

Rituals pertained more to everyday family activities like meals. Individuals negotiated decisions related to table manners, tastes in food, and meal times. The transition from a single parent family to a remarried family was characterized by an increase in traditional family customs.

In Joan's and Karen's cases, when their fathers remarried, they experienced some dissonance as a visitor in their dad's home. Acceptance of a stepmother in both cases was slow and awkward, involving periods of frustration and anxiety for all members.

4. Children's Involvement in Parent's Wedding

This theme emerged for five individuals (1 teen, 2 fathers, 1 mother) and crossed all three families in the sample group. It was supported by 5 critical incidents - 1 difficult, 4 helpful.

Involvement of children in the planning of the wedding as well as the wedding ceremony itself was significant. It helped to include the children, to make them feel an integral part of the wedding. When Bob's mother remarried, he and his sister actually took vows stating their acceptance and committment to their blended family. Joan, who initially reacted negatively to her father's decision to remarry, grew excited about being a bridesmaid in the ceremony. Karen's father expressed deep feelings of regret over not including her in his wedding plans or

ceremony. He reported he'd never forgive himself for hurting Karen and her brother by such an obvious exclusion.

5. Relationship with Younger Stepsiblings

This theme emerged for five individuals (2 teens, 1 father, 1 mother) and crossed two families in the sample group. It was supported by 7 critical incidents - 5 difficult, 2 helpful.

The initial adjustment to stepsiblings was difficult. It was threatening and strange to watch a parent become a parent again with a new partner. It was difficult to conceptualize what it would be like to relate to stepsiblings.

For all three teens in the study, mothers remarried men with children from a previous marriage - none with custody. Early visits with stepsiblings were described by teens as difficult. Initial dealings with younger, attention-seeking, and often ill-behaved siblings were problematic. The stepfather's role as a parent to his natural children was therefore compounded in the remarried family situation.

Joan was the only teen in the study whose stepmother became a parent for the first time with her father. During her stepmother's pregnancy, Joan was resentful and feared a loss of her father's attention. After the baby was born Joan became much more accepting. Her relationship with her stepmother experienced a marked positive change - much more relaxed. Becoming a biological parent herself, Joan's stepmother was more empathetic and appreciative of her husband's feelings for the children of his first marriage. Joan quickly grew to delight in the

new baby, and transformed her image of him as a half brother to a full brother.

6. Child's Involvement in Parent's Decision to Remarry

This theme emerged for three individuals (2 teens and 1 mother), and crossed two families in the sample group. It was supported by 5 critical incidents, all of them helpful.

Timing was vital to the acceptance of a parent's remarriage. Children needed sufficient time to adjust to their parents' separation and divorce before they could accept the idea of including an outsider in their family.

Bob's mother considered her children's approval of her decision to remarry crucial. She recounted an earlier relationship with a man that dissolved because her children stated a dislike for the man and a definite vote of no to the notion that mom marry him. At the time she was considering marrying her present husband, again, her children's approval was sought. It was considered more than a decision between one man and one woman; it was a decision made by a divorced father, a divorced mother and her two children. The children had a strong sense of being influential, indeed instrumental, in the decision to restructure their family.

7. Stepfather: Additional Adult Role Model for Child

This theme emerged for three individuals (2 teens, 1 mother) and surfaced in two families in the sample group. It was supported by 5 critical incidents - 2 difficult, 3 helpful.

Children were advantaged in some regards by having additional adult male role model. Though, in early stages, it may have been difficult for children to adjust to the new father's style and energy level, ultimately such change proved beneficial. Appreciation was expressed for stepfathers who displayed a committed, interested role in their stepchildren's life. Karen felt it was especially helpful for her younger brother, whom she perceived as needing an adult male to share his interests in hunting and fishing, to maintain a predictable, committed relationship.

8. Improved Financial Position in Remarried Family

This theme emerged for two individuals (2 mothers) and crossed two families in the sample group. It was supported by 2 critical incidents, both helpful.

An additional income was seen as helpful by two mothers. More income meant less financial worries as a family. It provided a more secure financial base resulting in decreased frugality and increased family luxury.

THEME DESCRIPTIONS

SEPARATION - DIVORCE PERIOD

1. Adjustment to Parents Dating

This theme emerged for six individuals (1 teen, 2 fathers and 3 mothers) and crossed all three families in the sample group. It was supported by 20 critical incidents - 12 difficult, 8 helpful.

The timing of parents beginning to date was significant. Children required sufficient time to adapt to their parents' separation and its attendant changes. Parents met with hostility and rejection from their children when dating began too soon after separation. For example, parents remembered blatant displays of rudeness on their children's part to a person they perceived as a challenger. Children seemed possessive of their parents' love and affection and were threatened by their parents dating. Stability and consistency as a separated family was necessary before children could begin to deal with a third party.

With time and further exposure to their parents dating, children relaxed their resistance. Indeed in some cases, children responded positively to the inclusion of mother's boyfriend or father's girlfriend in short holidays and family gatherings. Observing their parents' experiences with the opposite sex, children learned something about the condition of single adults in loving relationships.

2. Parents' Disagreements Over Financial Decisions

This theme emerged for four individuals (1 teen, 1 father and 2 mothers) and crossed two families in the sample group. It was supported by 8 critical incidents - 7 difficult and 1 helpful.

Money disputes between separated spouses were typified as situations where children were being used by parents to get at each other. Joan's parents, realizing the dilemma the situation was creating for their children, agreed to remain conscious of it and to refrain from such a tactic. Bob discussed the situation with his sister; they confronted their mother with the demand that they not be put in the middle anymore.

3. Custody Agreement: Access to Father

This theme emerged for four individuals (2 teens, 2 fathers) and crossed two families in the sample group. It was supported by 8 critical incidents - 2 difficult, 6 helpful.

Custody agreements worked best when children's needs remained a priority. It was important for children to have a stable, predictable custody agreement. When the custody of children wasn't used by parents to hurt each other, the children gained a better sense of being loved and cared for. Feelings of competitiveness had to be overcome in order to maintain fairness to children.

All three children in this study were placed in their mother's custody.

Joan's case was unique in that her brother was placed in his father's custody. Joan and her brother were asked to decide which parent they wanted to live with. Joan's father reported long term feelings of guilt over making his children choose between their mother and father. Joan's father and mother did agree to remain living in the same city until their children graduated from high school, which allowed maximal access to both parent's households.

For Karen and Bob's parents, the custody decision was clear. It seemed obvious from the time of separation that the children should stay with their mother, though the decision was made with access to their father encouraged.

4. Adjustment to New Home and Community

This theme emerged for four individuals (1 teen, 1 father and 2 mothers) and crossed two families in the sample group. It was supported by 6 critical incidents - 3 difficult, 3 helpful.

Children's personal space in a new home along with a sense of comfort and familiarity in a new community were common to incidents of this theme. Separation had meant the loss of a familiar home and community - a loss which was more acutely felt by Joan and Karen than by Bob. Both girls were uprooted from their favorite places - in each case from the farm to the city. Animals were very important to both Joan and Karen as young girls. Joan was relieved by taking one of her dogs with her when she moved.

The adjustment was eased by the time children had settled into the new

house and had private bedroom space - a place into which they could welcome old and new friends. Community comfort and familiarity was facilitated by children's involvements in recreational and sport activities, providing an avenue for establishing friendships.

5. Stability of Single Parent Household

This theme emerged for three individuals (3 mothers) and crossed three families in the sample group. It was supported by 4 critical incidents - all helpful.

Mothers saw significance in maintaining a solid home base for their children. Both Bob and Joan's mothers stayed committed to living in one place until their children finished high school. All three mothers in the study were able to establish financial stability and didn't depend on their ex-husbands' financial support to maintain their lifestyle. Their children didn't lack basic needs, nor did they sacrifice material possessions because of their parents' separation.

6. Open, Honest Discussions with Child

This theme emerged for three individuals (1 father, 2 mothers) and crossed all three families in the sample group. It was supported by 3 critical incidents - 1 difficult, 2 helpful.

Parents' talks with children about their feelings and thoughts were helpful in most instances, though not all. In Karen's case, her mother cited an incident that showed she was becoming too open with her daughter and needed to relate more to

her as a child, not as a peer. Bob's dad found it effective to talk to his children on their level of understanding and recalled using animal analogies to explain the divorce.

7. Exposure to Parents' Arguments

This theme emerged for three individuals (3 teens) and crossed all three families in the sample group. It was supported by three critical incidents - 1 difficult, 2 helpful.

Children in this study were sheltered from their parents' arguments to a large extent. Joan and her brother were usually outside playing when arguments arose. It was cited as helpful by Joan, in one instance, to hear her parents argue because she gained a better understanding of why they were separating. By contrast, Bob, hearing about problems he wasn't previously aware of, found it difficult to understand and accept.

8. Children's Increased Independence

This theme emerged for two individuals (2 teens) and crossed two families in the sample group. It was supported by 2 critical incidents - both helpful.

Children entered into conflicts more verbally and became more adept at expressing feelings about unfair responsibilities and being in the middle of their parents' disagreements. Bob and Karen both recalled significant incidents that involved them taking on an assertive role and dealing with resentments and conflict

in a mature way - as if they were taking on an adult's roles and their parents were taking on children's roles.

This chapter presented and described the themes of the study; the following chapter discusses the themes in the context of their support in related literature.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The present study describes significant characteristics of families who have experienced the reorganization process of separation - divorce and remarriage; its focus is on how these major changes affect adolescents. Visher & Visher (1985) pointed to a scarcity of literature available on the effects of these transitions on adolescents (most research has concentrated on the effects on children). Based on an analysis of the criticial incidents described in interviews with teenagers and their biological parents, this study's themes were determined. The majority of its themes are strongly supported by previous researchers.

The following themes will be discussed according to the strength of their support in the literature reviewed, beginning with the separation - divorce and remarriage themes that received the most support - progressing then to those that received the least support. The same sequence is applied to the themes of remarriage and separation - divorce. A section on unsupported themes follows the discussion of supported themes. The chapter concludes with implications of the present study.

(A) SEPARATION - DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE THEMES

Amount of Contact with Father after Separation

The strongest theme of the present study - and among the most apparent in attendant literature. Joan, Bob, and Karen experienced a significant reduction in the quantity of time spent with their fathers following parental separation. Therefore,

the quality of time became important in the maintenance of satisfactory relationships. Mothers were seen as helpful when they supported continuous, consistent contact with fathers. Bob's distress at his father's absence appeared more acute than Joan's and Karen's - this supports the contention of many researchers that boys experience more difficulty adjusting to divorce than do girls.

Researchers concurred the key to a positive affective bond between father and child was continuous parenting following divorce (Wynn & Brumberger, 1982, McGurk & Glachan, 1987). Fathers of subjects in this study who became preoccupied with their own needs at the time of separation, paid less attention to their children, thereby negatively impacting these children. Studies affirmed this situation, indicating that children are profoundly affected by their father's disinterest, feel rejected and long for his return (Kelly & Wallerstein, 1979, Kelly, 1981).

Frequent contact with fathers was related to positive adjustment and social relationships for children, especially boys (Kelly, 1981, Wallerstein, 1972, 1981). Teenagers in this study benefited from frequent contact with their fathers.

Bonding Between Mother and Child

An increased closeness with their mothers held both positive and negative consequences for teenagers in this study. While a close relationship with their mother was considered vital to the well-being of the single parent household, mother-child boundaries needed to be clearly established. Crosbie - Burnett & Ahrons (1985) supported this theme in their contention that mother-child relationships may be intensely cohesive with sufficient time needed to redefine

roles. With more responsibility in the home, children developed more of a peer relationship with their mother - the custodial parent.

Schwartzberg (1980) concurred that children who coped well maintained a distance from the parental crisis without impairing their capacity for empathy with at least one parent. As well, strong support for mother-child bonding was found in the research of Wallerstein (1981, 1985) and Wallerstein & Kelly (1976). Children in this study empathized with their mothers' worries and responsibilities. McGurk and Glachan (1987) determined that sons who had special relationships with their mothers were better able to cope in the aftermath of separation and divorce.

Fear of Abandonment

A strong theme of this study - parental separation and divorce frequently left children feeling deserted. Research indicated this feeling often well-founded in children whose parents wished to abandon a failed marriage and the children associated with it (Kelly, 1987, Wallerstein & Kelly, 1976). Frequent reference was made to children's perceptions of parental withdrawal as a lack of interest in themselves by McGurk & Glachan (1987) and Kelly & Wallerstein (1979). Hess and Camara (1979) associated the problems that underlied the relationship between children and their noncustodial parents with their mutual fear of losing each other.

Expression of Repressed Emotion

Intense feelings of resentment and self-repudiation were harboured by all three adolescents in this study. Occasions when these feelings were verbalized were regarded as opportunities for healthy release. Schwartzberg (1980) found adolescents' reactions were typically colored by grief and shame, though in my

observations, these feelings seemed to be repressed. Children were known to conceal strong feelings of anger, depression, denial and fear (Wallerstein, 1977, Kelly, 1981, Wallerstein & Kelly, 1976, Kelly & Wallerstein, 1979). Wynn & Brumberger (1982) supported the findings of the present study in their suggestion that children who held intense feelings within for too long were seriously hampered in their development.

Desire for Parents to Reunite

While teenagers in this study did not describe incidents related to this theme, in each case, at least one of their parents did. The duration and intensity of the desire varied; for Joan, it endured until the time of remarriage. Parents' dating was regarded as a threat to children's desire for a reconcilliation. Researchers discovered children of all ages hoped their parents would reunite and these hopes lasted much longer than expected (Wallerstein, 1977, Wallerstein & Kelly, 1976, Kelly & Wallerstein, 1979). Schwartzberg (1980) found adolescents longed intensely for an idealized nuclear family. Hetherington et al (1980) reported while divorced fathers' and mothers' levels of happiness, self-esteem and feelings of competency increased over a two year period, they were still not as high as those of married couples. It may be that the distress of divorced fathers and mothers contributed to their children's desire for a return to the former nuclear family structure.

Child's Increased Responsibility

The adjustment for children in this study to single parent family lifestyles meant acquiring additional household responsibilities. They complied with an increased demand to care for younger siblings, prepare meals, and complete general

household chores. The impact of increased responsibilities reportedly led to an accelerated maturation and understanding of the adult world. With children's increased responsibility often came increased independence as parents tended to be less consistent in their discipline and relied more on their children for support. This finding was supported by Crosbie - Burnett & Ahrons (1985) who found some children, holding significant power in a single parent home, feared displacement and a loss of status and power when their parents remarried; others were happily relieved of the responsibility and welcomed a stepparent. Hetherington et al (1980) discovered most women sought gratification in employment over household and childcare responsibilities - substantial responsibility for these duties then was delegated to their children. References to children's increased responsibilities were made by Wallerstein (1985), Schwartzberg (1980) and Wallerstein & Kelly (1976). Wallerstein (1981) reported some children developed responsible work habits and necessary skills in relationships and decision-making.

Divorced Parents in Friendly Communication

When divorced parents in this study communicated in a friendly, mature manner, their children benefited. They, reportedly, felt more valued as individuals and saw themselves as members of an expanded family system capable of functioning harmoniously. Often, parents subordinated their own needs in favor of their childrens to accomplish this goal. This theme is supported by Visher & Visher's (1979) contention that a healthy degree of acceptance and understanding by biological parents effects the healthy functioning of their children. Additionally, Visher & Visher (1985) cited the greatest previous stress of teenagers occurred when one parent verbally attacked the other.

Commonly, children's relationships with parents were imperiled by their mothers' and fathers' expressions of intense anger toward one another (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1976, Wallerstein, 1981). Additionally, some children's unhappiness was compounded by what they perceived as their parents' insistence that they choose sides in the divorce battle. Kelly (1981) criticized lawyers for directly or indirectly promoting uncooperativity between divorcing parents, especially, given the deleterious effect it would generate in their children's lives; little relationship was seen between parents' demands and children's actual needs.

Time Alone with One Parent

Children and parents in this study appreciated the time they were able to spend together. In same sex parent-child relationships, time was enjoyed in shared-interest activities. Into the period of remarriage, time spent by a child with a parent alone was regarded highly by both parties. It seemed the natural parent-child bond was strengthened by the occasional exclusion of a stepparent from a given activity.

This finding was supported by Schwartzberg (1980) who described children's need for empathy with at least one parent. Children's often invincible loyalty to their fathers (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1976) and the marked reduction in parental attention that children receive throughout and following the separation-divorce period (Wallerstein, 1985) bolster the value of one-to-one time parents and children spend together.

Parents' Involvement in Child's Favored Activities

Hockey, skiing and acting were the favored activities of the three teenagers in my study. Each teenager maintained a strong, enthusiastic involvement in one of

these activities throughout childhood and adolescence. Parents who actively supported their children in these activities, attended competitions, provided transportation, or coached, regarded themselves as implicitly providing continuous emotional committment to their children's growth. Though, from the children's point of view, determination in their favored activities may have been a way of engaging their parents' continued involvement in their lives - an involvement which they might otherwise have considered as being in jeopardy. Definitely, children's self-worth and identity was strengthened by parental involvement in their favored interests and conversely was weakened where involvement was minimal or non-existent.. Karen, for example, whose father resisted her repeated requests for him to attend her acting performances, developed long term feelings of resentment and distrust. Wallerstein (1985, 1981, 1979) found that when parents decreased their attentiveness to their children's needs and wishes, decreased pleasure in the parent-child relationship resulted. Wallerstein (1981), also reported that children better maintained their own development when parental commitment to them remained consistent and reliable.

Alienation from Society

This study showed that children struggled with feelings of rejection because they no longer lived in traditional nuclear family structures, and that adjusting to life in single parent households was often accompanied by feelings of humiliation. Wallerstein & Kelly's (1976) indication that children were ashamed of their family situation, with an implied rejection of themselves as unlovable, reinforces this theme. Schwartzberg (1980) described adolescents' reactions to family break-up as grief-accompanied-by-guilt which later became shame-accompanied-by-resentment.

Into the remarriage period, feelings of alienation remained. Grade nine graduations, for example, distressed two young teenagers in my study who received two parent invitations, but were at a loss as to what to do about their stepparents. Karen felt estranged when asked repeatedly to explain differing last names in her family and newly acquired siblings.

Sibling Relationships

The effect on sibling relaitonships during the separation-divorce and remarriage period received little attention in the literature I reviewed, though Wallerstein (1985) reported that sibling relationships provided children some insulation from exposure to parental discord, even violence. In general, however, researchers' attention was almost exclusively directed toward the husband-wife and the parent-child subsystems.

Teenagers of this study aspired to meaningful levels of caring and sympathetic understanding in supportive relationships with siblings. Although times of dissonance inevitably occured in sibling relationships as a result of the separation-divorce process, a powerful bond ultimately developed and helped them to deal with that very condition. A unique and significant factor is evident in the dependable, consistent nature of the brother-sister relationships in the families of this study. Sibling relationships, characterized by certainty and a lasting committment, helped to counterbalance their otherwise overwhelming feelings of doubt and abandonment resulting from parental separation.

(B) REMARRIAGE THEMES

Stepfather Initiates a Friendship with Stepchildren

My strongest theme of the remarriage period emerged as the development of friendships by stepfathers toward stepchildren. Stepfathers of teenagers Joan, Bob and Karen were more easily accepted when they worked towards establishing friendship-based relationships with their stepchildren versus parenting-based relationships. Boundaries in all three stepfamilies were challenged and it remained important for mothers to persevere as primary disciplinarians. In the present study, remarried family adjustment was smoother when stepfathers showed interest in their stepchildren's activities and allowed sufficient time for a trusting bond to develop.

Expectedly, the literature supported this theme. Stern (1978) stressed the importance of stepfathers establishing friendships with stepchildren before children would accept discipline. Too, Hetherington et al (1985) reported that the most successful stepfathers were those who established friendly relationships with their stepchildren before taking active roles in discipline and decision-making. Crosbie - Burnett & Ahrons (1985) warned stepfathers to be sensitive to the fact that mother-child bonds may be intensely cohesive. Esses & Campbell (1984) suggested that as much as stepparents might aspire to roles of nurturer, provider, and authority figure, they will always to some extent be non-parents. Visher & Visher (1979) advised stepparents to go slowly; remarried families usually have had little time to prepare and do not have appropriate models to follow where the inclusion of an "outsider" is concerned.

Loyalty to Father

I found that teenagers in my study maintained deep, longstanding loyalties to their fathers. Although contact was typically unreliable and sporadic, Karen expressed an unceasing devotion to her father. Crosbie - Burnett & Ahrons (1985) regarded conflicting loyalties as a significant characteristic of remarried families. Bob and his sister rebelled intensely against the suggestion they be adopted by their stepfather.

Kelly (1981), in a longitudinal study, indicated most children whose parents had remarried had accepted their stepparents but maintained a deeper attachment to their fathers. Hetherington et al (1985) and Stern (1978) asserted - and I would affirm - the need for stepfathers to initiate friendship relationships with their stepchildren: while allowing that their stepchildren should not be induced to forsake their biological fathers.

Stepfather: Additional Adult Role Model for Child

I found all teenagers in the present study were advantaged in some regards from an additional adult role model. Although initial adjustments were somewhat frustrating, children learned new ways of approaching and completing tasks by observing a new adult role model in their lives. Bob, particularly, benefited by gaining an adult male companion who enjoyed their favored activities, such as golf and fishing.

Clingempeel et al (1984) supported this finding when they reported stepfathers lessened the adverse effects of divorce, especially for boys. Hetherington et al (1985) noted, too, that divorced mothers and sons had much to

gain. Crosbie - Burnett & Ahrons (1985) contended a satisfactory stepfather - stepchild relationship was critical to stepfamily happiness.

(C) SEPARATION - DIVORCE THEMES

Custody Agreement: Access to Father

All teenagers in the present study were placed in the custody of their mothers. The custody decision was clear and obvious for Bob's and Karen's parents; in Joan's case, she and her brother were asked to choose which parent they wanted to live with. Joan's father reported long term feelings of guilt over this manner of deciding custody. Joan's parents agreed to maintain residences in the same city until such time as their children graduated from high school; this allowed maximal access to both parents' households.

Custody agreements worked best for families in this study when childrens' needs remained a priority. It was important for children to have stable, predictable custody agreements with access to fathers encouraged. When parents purposely did not use their childrens' access to their fathers as ways of hurting each other, children gained a better sense of being loved and cared for. Parents' own issues had to be handled directly without their children being placed in the middle.

Researchers have reported children typically live with their mother and have little or no contact with their fathers (Wallerstein, 1985, Kelly, 1981, Wallerstein & Kelly, 1976). Adolescents and children continue to feel rejected and profoundly moved by fathers' infrequent and unpredictable visiting (Kelly, 1981, Kelly & Wallerstein, 1979, Wallerstein & Kelly, 1976). Some children fantasized a

satisfying father-child relationship even when their fathers were openly rejecting them (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1976). Kelly (1981) reported many families experienced unexpected difficulty establishing visiting relationships with little assistance available from helping professionals.

Stability of Single Parent Household

Mothers of teenagers in the present study agreed on the need for a stable home-base to insure their children's well-being. As heads of single parent households, mothers strived for financial independence with a continued quality of a lifestyle - similar to that experienced by their children before parental separation and divorce.

This finding is supported by Wallerstein (1981) when he stresses that adjustment is closely related to the overall quality of life in the post - divorce family. Hetherington et al (1980) described all family members' functioning and interactions as altered by the impairment of a stable family structure. It would seem, too, that this already precarious stability is further threatened by parents' preoccupation with their own needs as opposed to the attention they might otherwise devote to their children's need for stability in a single parent home.

Open, Honest Discussions with Child

In the present study it was shown that parents' honest discussions with their children helped children adjust to parental separation and divorce. Wallerstein (1977) found children struggled hard to understand their parents' divorce and to deal with the loss; they were more able to maintain their own development when they understood the cause of divorce (Wallerstein, 1981). McGurk & Glachan

(1987), too, observed that children need to receive clear explanations for their parents' divorce. Wallerstein (1985) reported children harbor intense feelings, sometimes temporarily, sometimes lasting for years. Clearly, though, open, honest communication with children will aid them in their struggle to understand and to assuage with their intense feelings.

Child's Increased Independence

Previous research was consonant with my finding that divorce tends to push children forward into precocious, adult-like behaviors attended by increased independence from their families (Wynn & Brumberger, 1982, Schwartzberg, 1980, McGurk & Glachan, 1987). That children's household responsibilities and caring for younger siblings increased following parental separation and divorce was reinforced by Wallerstein (1985) and Wallerstein & Kelly (1976). Teenagers in the present study described conflicts they resolved by asserting their feelings of opposition to unfair responsibilities acquired. The behaviors of children in my study were anticipated by like behaviors in Wallerstein's study (1985); that is, the children made special efforts to make independent, well-informed choices and to work harder at their own relationships.

Exposure to Parents' Arguments

Children in the present study commonly remained distant from their parents' arguments - in some cases, of their own volition, in others, purposely distanced through parental intervention. In cases where children were exposed to parental disputes, positive and negative consequences resulted. For example, while children appreciated gaining a better understanding of the reasons for separation and divorce, they did not appreciate being unexpectedly apprised of problems that

previously existed.

Visher & Visher (1985) found teenagers in remarried families who reflected on their past reported their greatest previous stress as when one of their parents verbally attacked the other. When divorce failed to bring an expected relief in reducing this stress, Wynn & Brumberger (1982) concluded children had been seriously hampered in their emotional development. The children who improved following parental separation and divorce were those who had parents who maintained a distance between their anger for each other and their children's needs (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1976).

It is evident that an important relationship exists between children's exposure to parental arguments and their perception of divorce as a battle between their parents in which they are to take sides. I would suggest that negative consequences are more likely to occur when children ally themselves with one parent against the other, except in extreme cases of abuse or neglect, when a cohesive relationship with one parent is desirable.

Adjustment to New Home and Community

For all families in my study, separation and divorce meant the loss of a familiar home and community. Bob's, Karen's and Joan's adjustments were eased when comfort and familiarity in a new home and community was gained. Privacy and space to entertain friends in their new homes as well as involvement in recreational activities in their new community helped them adjust to the changes occurring in their families.

Wallerstein (1985) and Wallerstein & Kelly (1976) confirmed the importance of children feeling welcome in their new home situations. Hetherington et al (1980) linked practical problems of divorcing families to household, economic, and occupational stability.

Adjustmer.. to Parents' Dating

Although this was my strongest theme of the separation - divorce period, it was not strongly supported in the literature. Parents' dating surfaced as a significant issue for all families in the present study. When a parent began dating soon after separation, he or she typically was confronted by children's hostility and rejection of the individual being dated. Parents therefore made deliberate decisions to delay dating until their children became more accepting. Children eventually subdued their rebellion to their parents' romantic interests and grew to better accept their mothers' and fathers' dating partners.

Apparently, children must first acquire a base of stability and trust in their newly established single parent families before they will be open to sharing parents' affections. At this time, parents are challenged to sacrifice their own interests and needs as adults for the healthy adjustment of their children to a new lifestyle.

Parents, in the present study, challenged by their children to postpone dating, made a significant sacrifice. Hetherington et al (1980) noted when divorced mothers and fathers found intimacy in heterosexual relationships, their overall well-being improved. I believe children will better accept their parents' pursuit of intimacy in dating relationships after sufficient time has been allowed for them to re-stabilize and find trust and affection in transformed family structures.

(D) UNSUPPORTED THEMES

The following themes were not well supported in the literature reviewed. This lack of support - a unique part of my study may be attributed to its focus on adolescents' adjustments to parental separation, divorces and remarriage - differentiating it from many previous studies that focused on childrens' reactions.

SEPARATION - DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE THEME

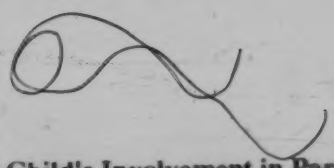
Empathy between Peers in Similar Situations

This was a strong theme of this study; members of all three families described a sense of relief for children when their peers experienced similar situations of family reorganization. Teenagers of the present sample groups reported that self-esteem improved by listening and talking with friends about family changes closely related to those already experienced by themselves. Adolescents' preoccupation with peer relationships may account for the strong impact of this theme.

REMARRIAGE THEME

Family Rituals and Traditions Established

A strong theme of this study, it was supported by all three families. Teenagers and adults recalled incidents that related to major lifestyle changes. Traditions surrounding occasions like Christmas and family birthdays needed to be re-established; daily rituals around meals and household routines challenged each remarried family member's adaptability and flexibility. I was impressed by the resourcefulness of these families who created novel, functional ways of meeting the needs of the many individuals belonging to the remarried family system.



Child's Involvement in Parents' Wedding

Another significant theme of this study, it was seen as desirable to involve children in wedding planning and in the ceremony itself. This theme is only indirectly supported by Crosbie - Burnett & Ahrons' (1985) contention that stepfamilies rely more on a total family harmony than on a marital harmony.

By integrally involving children in planning their parents' wedding, they were allowed to feel important at a time when they otherwise would have felt awkward and disregarded.

Child's Involvement in Parent's Decision to Remarry

The timing of the mother's or father's decision to remarry and the child's acceptance of a stepparent appeared as crucial issues in this study. In two families, children were consulted for their approval. As the reorganization process necessitates major lifestyle changes for all family members, I believe consultations with children throughout the decision-making process will help alleviate future conflicts. I also think if children are granted an excessive amount of influence in a parent's decision to remarry, they may gain an unwarranted, unhealthy sense of control which could easily lead to future power struggles.

Improved Financial Position in Remarried Family

This surfaced as the weakest theme of the remarriage period; its lack of support may be due to subjects' avoidance of topics related to the material aspects of remarriage. Although financial position did not appear to be a strong motivator of individuals, the prospect of less financial restraint and increased family luxury stood as an obvious advantage of remarriage, especially in two families.

SEPARATION - DIVORCE THEME

Parents' Disagreements Over Financial Decisions

The second strongest theme of the separation - divorce period, parental disputes over money issues proved difficult for children in most instances. Disagreements over financial issues created dilemma situations for children whose own needs and desires were the actual issues their parents disputed. Thus, children's frustrations escalated as characterized by feelings of guilt and confused loyalties.

(E) IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The Critical Incidents Technique proved highly effective in describing the content domain of the present study though future researchers using this technique should consider working with a larger sample group. Additionally, validation procedures would be enhanced by incorporating independent interviewers and objective data analysts in the research study.

More longitudinal studies are needed to better understand the immediate and projected effects of separation-divorce and remarriage on specific age groups and on sexes.

Remarried families from a broader socio-economic spectrum need to be studied. The present sample group represents a limited portion of society, concentrating as it does on middle-class, well educated families.

The structural differences between remarried and nuclear families require more

complete delineation. An improved understanding of the functional characteristics of remarried families is needed - appropriate models were lacking for families in this study.

Stepparenting roles and stepparent-stepchild relationships need to be better understood. To date, very little research has focused on stepmother families.

This study noted the importance of sibling relationships in divorcing and remarrying families, and it is hoped this will receive yet more attention in future research studies.

(F) IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNSELORS

Adolescents in this study recalled feelings of blame, humiliation, guilt, and anger, along with negative self-perceptions at the time of their parents' separation and divorce. Counsellors need to attend to the legitimacy of these feelings as well as the likelihood of children regressing and/or overcompensating socially, emotionally, and academically. Research has shown that children typically require one to two years to adjust to parental separation and divorce.

Parents of the present sample group received little assistance from counsellors at the time of divorce either through lack of awareness or through lack of motivation. Counsellors need specialized training to better assist families in the conciliation process. Of particular concern are their knowledge and skills in helping families negotiate decisions related to custody and visitation patterns.

Although the formation of a sample group for this study proved difficult due to set criteria that had to be satisfied, that difficulty resulted in an increased awareness of the growing number of remarried families in Alberta. Much of the literature suggests an increasing number of remarried families in Canada and in the United States. Counsellors are encouraged to increase their understanding, acceptance, and intervention strategies through reading, through attending presentations, and through becoming more aware of support groups.

In their adjustment to remarried family life-styles, family members in the present study struggled with changed expectations, new roles, and freshly formed traditions. It is only through recent research and observation that guidelines for remarried families are emerging. Counsellors, then, are obliged to help remarried families cope with the many adjustments they confront, remembering not to base the definition of a functional remarried family on that of a functional nuclear family.

Dyadic relationships in remarried families demand quality time. Although adolescents in this study valued time with both biological parents, they paid special, perhaps excessive, tribute to time spent with noncustodial parents. As a consequence, and to generate a sense of balance, it becomes important for remarried families as total groups, to devote time to each other and to plan and invent family traditions together.

The satisfaction of the stepparent-stepchild relationships are considered crucial to stepfamily happiness. Satisfaction in these relationships did not develop quickly in families of the present study. Remarried families, therefore, should be advised to go slowly, to take time to grow and develop. Stepfathers, too, are advised to be

supportive, but to leave the disciplinarian's role to biological mothers, at least in the formative years of remarried families.

(G) IMPLICATIONS FOR PARENTS

The present study found parents throughout periods of separation and divorce especially challenged to attend to their children's needs even though their own seemed so desperate. Parents are advised to obtain support through professional counselling and/or to join peer support groups to deal with their individual needs, thereby becoming more able to attend to parenting responsibilities and less inclined to rely on children for desired support.

Children in this study benefited from open, honest discussions with their parents that helped them understand why their parents divorced. While older children are more capable of understanding and integrating the consequences, younger children need explanations directed to their levels of comprehension. An example; Bob's father applied animal analogies to explain to his son and daughter the reasons for his divorce.

In this study, when one father - as a non-custodial parent - showed little interest in his child, long-term negative effects were experienced by the child. Frequent, reliable availability of non-custodial parents is paramount to children's overall well-being.

Adolescents in the present sample group strongly desired an ongoing, positive relationship with both of their biological parents. I contend that it is critical for

parents to maintain affective bonds with their children, even if it means hardship, ambiguity, challenge, and uncomfortable communication with an ex-spouse.

Adolescents in this study were known, as children, to engage in behaviors that challenged their parents' affection and commitment. Children need continued reassurance throughout divorce and remarriage periods that they are loved and will not be abandoned.

With increased maturity, adolescents expand their social and recreational commitments. Thus, it becomes vital to allow increased flexibility and to involve adolescents in decision-making related to visits with non-custodial parents.

To help schools better understand and meet the needs of children from single parent and remarried families, parents need to communicate directly and honestly with their children's teachers, school administrators, and counsellors. I recommend that teachers be informed when parents divorce and remarry in order to have an awareness that children's academic and social performance may be affected. Children may choose school venues to express blame, humiliation, anger, and regressive behavior. Of particular note for adolescents in the present study was the dissatisfaction and confusion engendered for families at the time of school graduations.

The preceding implications, though based on somewhat limited data, affirm the importance of ongoing research to the advancement and skills of those called upon to assist families through the process of separation, divorce, and remarriage.

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APPENDIX A.

Critical Incidents Interview Guides

CRITICAL INCIDENTS INTERVIEW GUIDE 1

TEENAGER

SEPARATION AND DIVORCE OF PARENTS

Establishing the Aim

Focus:
"Please focus on your experience of your mother and father's separation and divorce."

Separation and divorce criteria checks:
"How old were you when your mother and father first separated?"
"What did you think and how did you feel about the separation?"
"How old were you when your mother and father divorced?"
"What did you think and how did you feel about the divorce?"
"What actually happened during the separation and divorce of your parents?"

Context:
"Think of your relationships with your mother and father during their separation and divorce?"
"What were these relationships like for you?"

The Critical Incidents

Incident:
"Please describe a particular incident that significantly helped you during the separation and divorce of your parents."
"Please describe a particular incident that was significantly difficult for you during the separation and divorce of your parents."

Effect of incident criteria checks:
Clarity and amount of communication. Quality and amount of time spent with each parent during their separation and divorce. Other appropriate criteria.

Additional information to clarify incidents:
"How was that particular incident helpful for you?"
"How was that particular incident difficult for you?"
"How did this affect your relationships with your mother, father, and other members of your family?"

Search for any other incidents:

1 The guide was developed from the model in Woolsey, L. K. (1986). The critical incident technique: An innovative qualitative method of research. Canadian Journal of Counselling, 20, 242-254.

CRITICAL INCIDENTS INTERVIEW GUIDE 1

TEENAGER

MOTHER'S REMARRIAGE

FATHER'S REMARRIAGE (if applicable)

Establishing the Aim

Focus:
"Please focus on your experience of your mother's (father's) remarriage."

Remarriage criteria checks:
"How old were you when your mother (father) remarried?"
"What did you think and how did you feel about her (his) remarriage?"
"What actually happened during the remarriage of your mother (father)?"

Context:
"Think of your relationships with your mother, stepfather, father, and stepmother during your mother's (father's) remarriage?"
"What were these relationships like for you?"

The Critical Incidents

Incident:
"Please describe a particular incident that helped you during the remarriage of your mother (father)."
"Please describe a particular incident that was difficult for you during the remarriage of your mother (father)."

Effect of incident criteria checks:
"Clarity and amount of communication. Quality and amount of time spent with each parent during the remarriage. Other appropriate criteria.

Additional information to clarify incidents:
"How was that particular incident helpful for you?"
"How was that particular incident difficult for you?"
"How did this affect your relationships with your mother, stepfather, father, stepmother and other members of your family?"

Search for any other incidents:

1 The guide was developed from the model in Woolsey, L.K. (1986). The critical incident technique: An innovative qualitative method of research. Canadian Journal of Counselling, 20, 242-254.

CRITICAL INCIDENTS INTERVIEW GUIDE 1

BIOLOGICAL FATHER

SEPARATION AND DIVORCE

Establishing the Aim

Focus:
"Please focus on (target child's) experience of your separation and divorce."

Separation and divorce criteria checks:
"When were you first separated?"
"What did (target child) think and how did (target child) feel about the separation?"
"When did you divorce?"
"What did (target child) think and how did (target child) feel about the divorce?"
"What actually happened during your separation and divorce?"

Context:
"Think of (target child's) relationships with you and your former wife during your separation and divorce?"
"What were these relationships like for (target child)?"

The Critical Incidents

Incident:
"Please describe a particular incident that significantly helped (target child) during your separation and divorce."
"Please describe a particular incident that was significantly difficult for (target child) during your separation and divorce."

Effect of incident criteria checks:
Clarity and amount of communication. Quality and amount of time spent with each parent during their separation and divorce. Other appropriate criteria.

Additional information to clarify incidents:
"How was that particular incident helpful for (target child)?"
"How was that particular incident difficult for (target child)?"
"How did this affect (target child's) relationships with you, (her or his mother) and with other members of the family?

Search for any other incidents:

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1 The guide was developed from the model in Woolsey, L. K. (1986). The critical incident technique: An innovative qualitative method of research. Canadian Journal of Counselling, 20, 242-254.

CRITICAL INCIDENTS INTERVIEW GUIDE 1

BIOLOGICAL FATHER

FATHER'S REMARRIAGE (if applicable)

Establishing the Aim

Focus:
"Please focus on (target child's) experience of your remarriage."

Remarriage criteria checks:
"When did you remarry?"
"What did (target child) think and how did (target child) feel about your remarriage?"
"What actually happened during your remarriage?"

Context:
"Think of (target child's) relationships with you and (her or his) stepmother and mother during your remarriage?"
"What were these relationships like for (target child)?"

The Critical Incidents

Incident:
"Please describe a particular incident that significantly helped (target child) during your remarriage."
"Please describe a particular incident that was significantly difficult for (target child) during your remarriage."

Effect of incident criteria checks:
Clarity and amount of communication. Quality and amount of time spent with each parent during the remarriage. Other appropriate criteria.

Additional information to clarify incidents:
"How was that particular incident helpful for (target child)?"
"How was that particular incident difficult for (target child)?"
"How did this affect (target child's) relationships with you and (her or his) stepmother, mother, and other members of the family?

Search for any other incidents:

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CRITICAL INCIDENTS INTERVIEW GUIDE 1

BIOLOGICAL MOTHER

SEPARATION AND DIVORCE

Establishing the Aim

Focus:
"Please focus on (target child's) experience of your separation and divorce."

Separation and divorce criteria checks:
"When were you first separated?"
"What did (target child) think and how did (target child) feel about the separation?"
"When did you divorce?"
"What did (target child) think and how did (target child) feel about the divorce?"
"What actually happened during your separation and divorce?"

Context:
"Think of (target child's) relationships with you and your former husband during your separation and divorce?"
"What were these relationships like for (target child)?"

The Critical Incidents

Incident:
"Please describe a particular incident that significantly helped (target child) during your separation and divorce."
"Please describe a particular incident that was significantly difficult for (target child) during your separation and divorce."

Effect of incident criteria checks:
Clarity and amount of communication. Quality and amount of time spent with each parent during their separation and divorce. Other appropriate criteria.

Additional information to clarify incidents:
"How was that particular incident helpful for (target child)?"
"How was that particular incident difficult for (target child)?"
"How did this affect (target child's) relationships with you, (her or his father) and with other members of the family?"

Search for any other incidents:

1 The guide was developed from the model in Woolsey, L. K. (1986). The critical incident technique: An innovative qualitative method of research. Canadian Journal of Counselling, 20, 242-254.

CRITICAL INCIDENTS INTERVIEW GUIDE 1

BIOLOGICAL MOTHER

MOTHER'S REMARRIAGE

Establishing the Aim

Focus:
"Please focus on (target child's) experience of your remarriage."

Remarriage criteria checks:
"When did you remarry?"
"What did (target child) think and how did (target child) feel about your remarriage?"
"What actually happened during your remarriage?"

Context:
"Think of (target child's) relationships with you and (her or his) stepfather and father during your remarriage?"
"What were these relationships like for (target child)?"

The Critical Incidents

Incident:
"Please describe a particular incident that significantly helped (target child) during your remarriage."
"Please describe a particular incident that was significantly difficult for (target child) during your remarriage."

Effect of incident criteria checks:
Clarity and amount of communication. Quality and amount of time spent with each parent during the remarriage. Other appropriate criteria.

Additional information to clarify incidents:
"How was that particular incident helpful for (target child)?"
"How was that particular incident difficult for (target child)?"
"How did this affect (target child's) relationships with you and (her or his) stepfather, father, and other members of the family?

Search for any other incidents:

1 The guide was developed from the model in Woolsey, L. K. (1986). The critical incident technique: An innovative qualitative method of research. Canadian Journal of Counselling, 20, 242-254.

APPENDIX B.

Sample Coded Protocol

SAMPLE CODED PROTOCOL

DAN: Well, how was it helpful?

JOAN: Leaving? Got to be - I don't know how it was helpful, I just - it was better that we were away from them because I bet we missed a lot of - we missed all the fighting and we missed most of it - we didn't really - when we were inside, I don't really remember, we just pretty well just immediately went and played with the dogs or whatever. We didn't really talk much about it. We didn't really. I can't remember to him, really about it, couple times we talked about it, but I don't really think I - well, it's kind of around in the atmosphere like Betty and Gordie are always fighting. We, I saw Betty complaining and fighting more than my mom and dad did so from my point of view it was okay - like our divorce or their divorce wasn't nearly as verbal, didn't seem to be anyway, verbal - like neither of them hit the bottle like Betty did - well, Betty used to always come over to when she was drunk, so - I don't know, I think we were used to it before it happened to us. It was pretty bad, but I think a lot of people get worse - a lot of people have worse divorces.

SD-H12

SD-H12

DAN: It sounds as if being exposed to Betty and seeing that happen in another family - like helped you.

JOAN: Yeah, we saw them more cuz she would just storm into our house, and like start yelling about Gordie and calling him names and saying she was leaving him right now and she'd be totally drunk and wet sometimes like from the rain or whatever. Sometimes she would come with bruises. She said they were from Gordie, but Gordie said they weren't. Gordie said it was just from running around. I don't know. Mom would never - I

SD-H13

asked Mom a couple of times if Gordie hit Betty an she didn't think so cuz Betty was such a nut, at the time, she was almost all - actually one thing I do remember which I hated about the divorce more than anything was when Dad and Mom asked me and Kelly who we wanted to live with. Me and Kelly had to decide who we wanted to live with and actually Kelly right away said Dad, so I was sort of obligated to my mom - I think at the time I was closer to my dad than my mom. I think I wanted to move in with my dad. Like, but I'd feel guilty about it. Kind of felt guilty at the time so I just said mom. Cuz I knew she was moving to Sylvan Lake and I wanted to move to Sylvan, but or whatever, but that was bad -- like I wish they hadn't done that.

SD-
DS

DAN: How was having to decide where - who you were going to live with difficult for you?

JOAN: It was sort of like if I picked my mom, my dad would be hurt, and if I picked my dad, my mom would be hurt, and like I didn't want to do that. It would be better if they just picked themselves. Like I think it would have gone that ways anyway - I would have gone with my mom; Kelly would have gone with Dad. Like at the time, I didn't - oh, I think that was pretty well the most upsetting part.

SD-
DS

CODE

ABBREVIATIONS

R	-	**Remarriage**
SD	-	**Separation-Divorce**
R & SD	-	**Remarriage and Separation-Divorce**
H	-	**Helpful**
D	-	**Difficult**

APPENDIX C.

Sample Protocol Analysis Sheet

Sample Protocol Analysis Sheet

Joan's Father

8. Child's involvement in parent's wedding - made to feel like a real part of the family. (R - H1, H2, pg. 2).
(*Involved in planning the day as well as being a part of the day).
Child's involvement in parents wedding.

9. Child's special time alone with stepparent, building a friendship.
(R - H3, H4, pg. 3, 4).
Time alone with stepparent.

10. Dealing with stepbrothers and sisters. Initially a difficult adjustment.
Dealing with parent being a parent again with a new partner.
(R - H4, pg. 4). (D 1).
Dealing with stepsiblings.
*** Not an issue for Karen.**

11. Stepparent being a parent - more open to child's feelings, wants, desires. (R - H6, pg. 5).
More empathy, more easy-going. More appreciative of spouse's strong feelings for their child from first marriage.
Stepparent becoming a biological parent.

12. Continuous support and involvement in child's activities.
(SD & R). (R - H7, H8, pg. 6, 7).

Important realization - I'm not going to be abandoned, lose all dad's time and attention. Helps child become more independent.

Continuous support of child's involvement in a favored activity.

13. Remarriage as a formal realization that first marriage will not re-unite. Teenager goes on with less uncertainty in her life, less anxiety, less stress. (R - H9, pg. 7).

Effects of remarriage.

14. Fun times - important.

(R - H11, pg. 12).

Remember family activities - holidays, special occasions like birthdays, graduations.

CODE

ABBREVIATIONS

R	-	**Remarriage**
SD	-	**Separation-Divorce**
R & SD	-	**Remarriage and Separation-Divorce**
H	-	**Helpful**
D	-	**Difficult**

APPENDIX D.

Critical Incidents Interview Results

1.1 CRITICAL INCIDENTS INTERVIEW RESULTS
Teenage Female: Karen (assumed name)
Difficult Incidents - Separation - Divorce Period

Critical Incident	Description of Difficulty
1. Early visit with Dad. Suprised to see a woman there.	Expected Dad to be alone because he left us, should be punished. Considered it cheating, unfaithfulness.
2. Parents divided kitchen plates. Dad picked up his belongings.	Could feel the tension - the anger, pain and sadness all mixed together... so much pain. Made everything so final - felt like a death in the family.
3. Heard mom crying in her room.	Felt her pain, how hard it was for her.
4. Fight with mother shortly after divorce.	Seemed to be competing for places in mom and dad's eyes. Mom working nights - wanted more of her attention.
5. Moved to Edmonton.	Not in same city as dad anymore. Couldn't run over to see him. Felt like mom was pulling us away from dad. Created an emotional void.
6. Younger brother got sick and started crying at bus station on way to visit dad.	Always had to be in charge of brother. Was more responsible for him than I ever had been.
7. Had to decide which parent to spend Christmas with.	Torn between choosing.
8. Grade 9 Graduation. Expected dad to attend - he pulled out at the last minute.	Very disappointed, really distanced from dad emotionally. Quit relying on him. Stopped trying to please him.
9. Supposed to go fishing with dad - he cancelled at last minute.	Felt shot down, hurt, not wanting to try or care anymore.
10. Listened to younger brother's call to dad to ask him if he could come to live with him. Dad said: "No." Brother in a stupor afterwards.	Felt brother's pain and agony, being a boy really wanted to be close to dad. Angry at dad, felt distanced, resentful. Realized dad wasn't going to be there for me either.
11. Mom's first serious relationship with man since leaving dad.	Angry because I thought he was trying to replace my dad, trying to take my mom away from me.
12. Told parents of a friend in a very stable family unit that my parents were divorced.	Felt rejected, unworthy of being their child's friend. Felt like 'the different one.'

1.2 CRITICAL INCIDENTS INTERVIEW RESULTS
Teenage Female: Karen (assumed name)
Helpful Incidents - Separation - Divorce Period

Critical Incident	Description of Helpfulness
1. Visited dad and stepmother - sat them both down at the table and talked about how dad was treating my brother and how he was shirking his responsibilities to us.	Brought enlightenment to our relationship. Get along better now - more honesty and openness in our relationship. Learned more about the kind of person dad is. Dealt with a lot of tension that had been there for a long time.
2. Moved in with my best girl friend and her dad who had been like a father figure to me.	Made my father sit up and take attention. Forced him to realize the need for him to play a more active role in my life. He started spending more time with me, asked me to come and live with him.
3. Spent lots of nights talking with mom.	Helped me deal with my anger - tended to keep it inside.
4. Mom had friends over - male and female - since she had gotten divorced - I threw a tantrum.	It was a healthy release. It was so hard to watch mom rebuild her life - it made me really angry. Didn't understand why. After that, things worked out a lot better between mom and I.
5. Listened to mom stick up for me to my father.	Taught me a lot about how to stick up for myself. Gave me a lot of my own self-esteem. Helped me deal with my feelings of worthlessness related to the divorce.
6. Mom's first serious relationship with a man since leaving dad.	Helped me let go of desire to get back together as a family. Accepted reality better.
7. Good friend's parents got divorced.	Helped to help someone else. Worked through a lot of my own problems. Let me know I wasn't the only one going through the divorce process.
8. Telling friends I was going to see my father that weekend.	Being honest about it made me a stronger person. Telling others helped me accept reality.
9. Mom's friend asked me to fill out a questionnaire as part of a study she was doing for a psychology course.	Became more outgoing, less quiet and withdrawn. Got lots of attention, felt I was interesting - because my parents were divorced.

1.3 CRITICAL INCIDENTS INTERVIEW RESULTS
Teenage Female: Karen (assumed name)
Difficult Incidents - Remarriage Period

Critical Incident	Description of Difficulty
1. Stepfather asked me to do a household chore.	Really hard to accept authority from a man. Always been disciplined by my mom. Resent and resist the interference.
2. Got in trouble at school and was reprimanded by a male teacher.	Compelled to reject it. Felt he had no right to punish me.
3. Visit with dad, maintained my best behavior.	Want to make sure our time together is productive, quality time. Don't feel comfortable dealing with anything negative.
4. Heard news that mom was getting married.	Seemed too sudden. I had to trust her completely.
5. Had problems with renting a movie. My last name different than that on family card.	Seemed so bizarre, so confusing.
6. Went to get learner's license. Had to bring a note from mom as well as I.D. because her name was different. They had to call her, asked a bunch of personal questions.	Felt silly, embarrassed.
7. School registered me under my mom's last name - not mine.	Missed classes. Didn't know where I was supposed to be.
8. Asked at a family reunion what my last name was.	Created confusion. Felt stupid.
9. Stepbrother and stepsister visited. Running around - broke household article.	Annoyed at being with such young kids. Too hyper, too noisy, constantly in motion. Putting two families together is really hard.
10. Took stepbrothers for ice cream cones - was asked if they were my brother and sister.	Bothersome to have to explain that my mom didn't have two more kids. Too much confusion.

11. Went outside to suntan.	Felt self conscious with stepfather around. Have to watch my behavior more.
12. Stepfather expects a sit down meal at 6:30 every night.	Stepfather too traditional - not used to structured meal times. Hard to adapt.

1.4 CRITICAL INCIDENTS INTERVIEW RESULTS
Teenage Female: Karen (assumed name)
Helpful Incidents - Remarriage Period

Critical Incident	Description of Helpfulness
1. Getting along well with younger brother.	Not competing for parents' attention. Closer relationship with brother.
2. Disciplined by stepfather.	Understood and worked through some of my resistance to male authority.
3. Had a very honest talk with stepfather about concerns with my relationship with dad.	Don't feel as compelled to spend time with dad. Straightened out a lot by talking with a man, put relationship with my dad in perspective.
4. First met stepfather. Liked him - he was lots of fun.	Really happy for mom; he seemed so good for her - not like the other men in her life.
5. Had cabbage rolls instead of potatoes because stepfather prefers German food.	Shows we're willing to compromise.

1.5 CRITICAL INCIDENTS INTERVIEW RESULTS
Biological Father of Karen (assumed name)
Difficult Incidents - Separation - Divorce Period

Critical Incident	Description of Difficulty
1. Kids leaving to go back to their mother after a weekend visit.	Karen had to go back to her other way of life at the time. Karen wanted to love both her parents equally. Missed her father.
2. Didn't see kids at all first month or two of separation. Had to do a lot of adjustment myself.	Felt abandoned, confused.
3. Karen's brother went on a rampage.	Kids wanted us to get back together, to go back to normal.

1.6 CRITICAL INCIDENTS INTERVIEW RESULTS
Biological Father of Karen (assumed name)
Helpful Incidents - Separation - Divorce Period

Critical Incident	Description of Helpfulness
1. Ex-wife and myself both taught children that living together unhappy is not good for people.	Helped kids accept that we weren't going to get back together.
2. Picked the kids up for a weekend - sat down and had a coffee and chat with ex-wife.	Kids knew we weren't enemies, we could be friends but not man and wife.
3. Weekend visit with kids - devoted my time to them.	Kids felt cared about.

1.7 CRITICAL INCIDENTS INTERVIEW RESULTS
Biological Fatherof Karen (assumed name)
Difficult Incidents - Remarriage Period

Critical Incident	Description of Difficulty
1. My wedding day - new wife demanded all my devotion and attention.	Kids were ignored, felt excluded, unimportant.
2. Kids visit - made mistake, new wife got upset. I clamped down on them.	Kids felt they had to be perfect, felt unwanted.
3. I escape into my work.	Don't spend time with kids I should.
4. Moved farther away from kids' home.	Lifestyles grew farther apart.

1.8 CRITICAL INCIDENTS INTERVIEW RESULTS
Biological Father of Karen (assumed name)
Helpful Incidents - Remarriage Period

Critical Incident	Description of Helpfulness
1. Kids visit with myself and girlfriend before actual marriage.	Kids felt accepted and loved, enjoyed themselves, got along well.
2. Finally, spoke my mind. Told new wife things weren't going well; my kids weren't being treated well.	New wife started accepting my kids more, less possessive of me, still disciplining them but showing more affection.
3. Kids visited - new wife was away. Spent time alone.	Kids weren't pressured. Felt more comfortable, more wanted. Got time for serious talk; kids felt good about it.
4. New wife started showing more affection towards my kids.	More of a normal situation. Kids felt less anxious visiting.
5. Sat down and talked without interference from new wife.	Karen got support from me she needs. Gave her a chance to be listened to, to talk about what's happening in her life.

1.9 CRITICAL INCIDENTS INTERVIEW RESULTS
Biological Mother of Karen (assumed name)
Difficult Incidents - Separation - Divorce Period

Critical Incident	Description of Difficulty
1. I went back to school. Karen didn't want to be left with a babysitter.	Not used to being babysat. Not used to being away from mom so much.
2. First Christmas - took a family photo. Everybody's faces looked very taunt and tired.	Karen was fatigued, wasn't as easy-going and pliable as normal.
3. Was talking about an uncle at large for Karen's brother. She wanted to know why she couldn't have one.	Felt the loss of her father. Missed the happy times being with him.
4. Brought home a fellow I was dating. Karen asked why I'd go out with him and commented that he wasn't even good looking in front of him.	Angry at having to accept other men in my life. Felt protective of me.
5. Karen made excuse for dad not calling. "My dad works real hard." She'd make the effort to call him.	She was hurt that he didn't call. Wanted more contact.
6. Karen wouldn't invite her friends over. I asked her about it. She said their parents wouldn't let them come if they knew I was on my own. We were living in quite an affluent area with very few single people.	Insecure about being in a single parent family. Felt like our family was incomplete - something was wrong with it.
7. Broke up with a fellow I had been dating for two years. Karen asked "Why can't he come back? What did you say to him?"	Thought mom couldn't get her act together with guys. Didn't want to attach herself to anybody anymore because they just came and went.
8. Break up of second serious relationship since marriage separation.	Karen was really having trouble with guys, didn't want anybody getting close to her. Became afraid of being close to guys.

9. Grade 9 Grad - planned around her dad coming. He phoned and said he wasn't coming.	Thought it was too important of an occasion for her dad to let her down. Extremely disappointed - went into a crisis stage. Lost almost all her trust in her dad.
10. Teacher called - said Karen and another girl had hurt a boy at school.	Karen was angry. Resented the amount of care she was expected to give her younger brother....wanted to punish little boys.
11. I came home tired and was frustrated Karen didn't do housework she was asked to.	The extra responsibility angered her. She didn't want it; she wanted to be a kid.
12. I came home and talked to Karen about my personal problems. Karen said, "Mom, I don't want to listen to this."	Karen didn't want to be used as a sounding board. Still angry I left her father and was frustrated with being used as a sounding board. Felt she was being forced to grow up too fast.
13. I phoned Karen's father and blasted him for not showing up for a scheduled visit. I thought Karen was sleeping and wouldn't hear.	Led Karen to believe her dad only visited under pressure.

1.10 CRITICAL INCIDENTS INTERVIEW RESULTS
Biological Mother of Karen (assumed name)
Helpful Incidents - Separation - Divorce Period

Critical Incident	Description of Helpfulness
1. Started dating a fellow that was very gentle and easy-going.	Karen adored him. She needed a male influence at that time - responded positively to his affection.
2. A male friend of mine came to Karen's grade 9 grad after her dad had cancelled. Gave her a big painting as a grad present.	Important that a man be there.
3. Karen moved in with her girl friend and her dad for six months.	Gave her some time and space to work some things out. Important to be around a male. Enjoyed living on a farm - being close to animals. Her dad started to show concern - phoned her. Drove down twice to visit.
4. Karen moved back home. We had a good talk.	Communication improved. Stabilized our relationship. Built in some mutual respect. Appreciated her home more.
5. Friend of mine returned from a trip to Holland - brought back a gift for Karen.	Karen felt special.
6. Karen got good marks at school. Was liked by her teachers.	Boosted her self-confidence. Able to generate a lot of positive stuff coming back to her.
7. Arranged for a babysitter for younger brother so Karen could come home and be alone.	Lowered her responsibilities. Lessened her resentment of younger brother. Became less angry.
8. The parents of Karen's good friends broke up.	Karen didn't feel so abnormal. Had someone to share with and open up to. Didn't see her mom as so unusual.
9. Moved to a bigger city.	More kids in single parent living situation. Felt more normal.

1.11 CRITICAL INCIDENTS INTERVIEW RESULTS
Biological Mother of Karen (assumed name)
Difficult Incidents - Remarriage Period

Critical Incident	Description of Difficulty
1. Observing stepfather discipline younger brother for not being responsible.	Worried for younger brother, thinks stepfather is too hard on him, too authoritarian.
2. Stepfather insisted I let him know where I am on a call for work.	Sees it as trying to rule me. Hard to get used to somebody in that way.
3. Karen's dad brought her brother back. Her dad and stepfather in the kitchen at the same time - Karen stood in the middle, an equal distance from both of them.	Confused as to where she stands. Wants her father to love her and be there but her stepfather's the one who's been there instrumentally. Doesn't want to offend either of them.

1.12 CRITICAL INCIDENTS INTERVIEW RESULTS
Biological Mother of Karen (assumed name)
Helpful Incidents - Remarriage Period

Critical Incident	Description of Helpfulness
1. I fulfilled a promise made to Karen. When I separated with her father, she had to give us her pony. I promised I would get her a horse one day.	Strengthened our relationship, her trust in me. Helped her accept the past, began to believe problems can be overcome.
2. Karen told me I was really happy with this person, not anxious, or worried. She said she was excited for me.	Karen became more relaxed, more content than she has ever been.
3. We're home at night as a family, do things together - Karen doesn't particpate a lot.	Gives a sense of security. Able to develop her independence more easily.
4. Karen came in with some friends. Introduced myself and her stepfather as "my parents."	Likes the idea of a family unit. Makes her feel comfortable.
5. Two incomes in present family.	Creates a steadier environment, lack of financial worries.
6. Karen told her stepfather she didn't like the way he was treating her brother. Discussion followed.	Opened up communications. Feelings were expressed. Karen understood him better.
7. I insisted Karen's stepfather accept that I stay in the primary disciplinarian role.	Allowed continuity in our relationship. Accepting stepfather easier. Gave time needed to believe in him, to trust him.
8. Sat down together at the table and dealt with a problem together.	Feelings expressed more easily. Kids didn't feel dominated.
9. Stepfather gave Karen driving lessons.	Shows he accommodates her needs.
10. Karen and her stepfather built a dog run together.	Knows he's willing to participate in her life.
11. Karen phoned late at night - needed a ride home.	Shows he cares for her safety and well-being.

2.1 CRITICAL INCIDENTS INTERVIEW RESULTS
Teenage Female: Joan (assumed name)
Difficult Incidents - Separation - Divorce Period

Critical Incident	Description of Difficulty
1. Brother told me parents are getting separated again and they're getting a divorce. I told him to shut up.	Didn't want to believe it, to accept it.
2. Dad told me he was getting married.	Was angry. Scared I would be abandoned, we wouldn't be doing things together anymore.
3. Moving away from the farm.	Didn't want to move. Hated having to leave the animals.
4. Mom and dad arguing over the selling price of the farm.	We were in the middle. Didn't want to sell, we grew up there; they had to split up the money.
5. My brother and I had to decide which parent we wanted to live with.	Didn't want to hurt either parent. Felt guilty, very torn and upset.
6. Went on horseback trip. Dad sent us on ahead with guide, met us the next day with his girlfriend.	Felt he would rather be with her than with us. Was mad at him, wanted to avoid him.

2.2 CRITICAL INCIDENTS INTERVIEW RESULTS
Teenage Female: Joan (assumedname)
Helpful Incidents - Separation - Divorce Period

Critical Incident	Description of Helpfulness
1. Mom and dad were fighting. Mom had a temper tantrum, threw a lamp and broke it. We cleaned it up.	We finally started to understand why they couldn't be together.
2. After first separation, mom and dad got back together again. Told us they were doing it because of us.	Glad they were trying.
3. Spent lots of time with the dogs and the cats.	Loved animals. Knew they wouldn't go away.
4. Visit at dad's. Alone with brother watching horror movie, was scared - dad came home.	Happy dad was there, not scared anymore. Felt safe.
5. Got sick - mom stayed home with me until I got better.	Was cared for, was important.
6. Moved to same city as dad and brother.	Helped accept our family was separated. Got to see dad and brother a lot more, much easier access. Made new friends. Didn't miss the farm as much.
7. Set up my bedroom when we moved, got my own furniture and stuff.	Started spending more time at home, less at dad's. Felt like a special place of my own.
8. Camping trip with dad.	Didn't really miss dad and brother.
9. Dad told me he was going to get married. I got really mad - screamed. Then, we talked for hours.	Got a lot out. Able to express my thoughts and feelings. Easier to accept changes. Wasn't so scared of being abandoned.
10. Sold the farm, took our dog with us.	Didn't have to leave all the animals.
11. Mom and dad fighting. My brother and I went outside and played with the dogs.	Missed out on the fighting. Didn't like to hear them arguing.

12. Neighbor stormed into our house, was drunk and wet from the rain, complaining about her husband. Said she was leaving him.	Their situation was worse than ours - more fighting, more drinking.
13. Got into figure skating program in new community.	Kept me busy, made friends.
14. Dad drove me to a ski race.	Needed time alone with dad. Brother was always there when I visited. Made us closer.

2.3 CRITICAL INCIDENTS INTERVIEW RESULTS
Teenage Female: Joan (assumed name)
Difficult Incidents - Remarriage Period

Critical Incident	Description of Difficulty
1. Being told what to do by stepmother. Being mothered by her.	Angry, didn't think she had any right to do that.
2. Stepmother talking about having babies with dad.	She was too young for dad. She was into this commitment stuff. He'd have to start all over again. Felt confused.
3. Stepmother not doing things with us that we like to do - like taking us to the ponds.	Didn't share the same type of interests. Wasn't fun to be with. Made it harder to like her, get to know her.
4. Stepmother made a big fuss about her wedding plans.	She nagged. She'd get cranky. Didn't like being around her. Everything had to be so official. She was trying too hard.
5. Stepmother tried to talk to me about how I felt about her moving in.	I didn't want her to, but I wasn't comfortable enough to tell the truth. It was too quick.
6. Stepmother's pregnancy.	Didn't want to admit I was going to have a baby brother. Didn't know what to expect, hard to accept. Felt sorry for my dad - he's going to have to go through it all again, won't be able to travel, to retire early.

2.4 CRITICAL INCIDENTS INTERVIEW RESULTS
Teenage Female: Joan (assumed name)
Helpful Incidents - Remarriage Period

Critical Incident	Description of Helpfulness
1. I was a bridesmaid at my dad's wedding.	Finally got into the excitement of it. Stepmother started laying back a bit; she finally started acting like herself, stopped trying to be somebody she wasn't.
2. Mom's boyfriend moved in with us.	I had known him a long time before - made it easier.
3. Mom and stepfather argue, I take sides.	I'm really comfortable. Free to express my opinions.
4. Like my room, like our house.	Feels like home. I'm really comfortable.
5. Playing and laughing with baby stepbrother.	It was fun. He's a really good kid.

2.5 CRITICAL INCIDENTS INTERVIEW RESULTS
Biological Father of Joan (assumed name)
Difficult Incidents - Separation - Divorce Period

Critical Incident	Description of Difficulty
1. The night we decided where the kids were going to live. We had the kids choose who they wanted to live with.	Very traumatic on the kids. They had to decide.
2. Joan rejected my girlfriend, put her through the grinder.	Joan struggled the whole time. Very jealous, possessive of me. Thought I'd be taken away from her.
3. Joan missed the farm - always talked about moving back, about us getting back together.	Hard for her to accept the separation. Hurt her to have to leave the farm. Hard for her to get over the hurt, to understand why we were separating.
4. I brought a girlfriend on a holiday.	Too soon - kids weren't ready to deal with it. Joan was very demanding of my time - much more so than her brother.

2.6 CRITICAL INCIDENTS INTERVIEW RESULTS
Biological Father of Joan (assumed name)
Helpful Incidents - Divorce Period

Critical Incident	Description of Helpfulness
1. Ex-wife and I made a conscious decision to stay in the same city.	Easy access for all of us to see each other freely. Hasn't been a separation in terms of miles.
2. Ex-wife and I made a conscious decision not to use the kids between us anymore.	Custody wasn't a problem. More able to enjoy time away from the kids - less responsibility, more freedom.
3. Kept reminding Joan in a kind way that her mom and I were not getting back together.	Helped her accept the situation as it was.
4. Always got brand new ski equipment, nothing second hand.	Compensated for the divorce.
5. Appealed to Joan's very picky taste in foods.	Made her happy. Compensated for the divorce.
6. Camping trips together.	Appeased her, she enjoyed it. Eased her over the divorce, gave time to talk.
7. Ski trip - Joan, her brother and I.	Had fun together. Brought us really close together.
8. Rock climbing trip - she was determined to make it to the top. Refused to give up.	Helped her become a stronger person, more positive attitude.
9. Got Joan involved in baseball.	Made good friends. Stayed active, busy. Involved in a new community.
10. Drove Joan to skiing - 2 or 3 times a week.	Kept us really close. Don't feel that I've ever stopped knowing her.
11. Joan phones every day. Phones collect when she's away on ski trips.	Keeps us really close.

2.7 CRITICAL INCIDENTS INTERVIEW RESULTS
Biological Father of Joan (assumed name)
Difficult Incidents - Remarriage Period

Critical Incidents	Description of Difficulty
1. New wife's pregnancy.	Really threatened in the beginning - feared she'd be abandoned, less time with her dad.
2. Stepmother upset about Joan's table manners.	Stepmother's expectations too restricted, used to more formal dining customs. Don't want Joan to feel unwelcome in our home.
3. Joan visiting, ate all the fruit on the table.	Don't want to impose rules and values on her when she doesn't live here full time. Causes friction. Don't want her to feel negative - sometimes the time's not there to work out the stresses.

2.8 CRITICAL INCIDENTS INTERVIEW RESULTS
Biological Father of Joan (assumed name)
Helpful Incidents - Remarriage Period

Critical Incident	Description of Helpfulness
1. Joan was a bridesmaid at our wedding.	Wasn't left out at the time of marriage, was a real part of the family.
2. New wife took Joan shopping with her for wedding dresses.	Stayed continuously involved in actual marriage.
3. Joan was spending a lot of time away from the family and was blaming us for it. We had a long talk about it.	Helped her realize she was responsible for pulling away, was very involved with her friends.
4. Came home to find Joan and her stepmother sitting in bed watching a soap opera.	Their relationship became closer, more positive.
5. Joan took her new baby stepbrother to visit with her mom's sister.	Not threatened by a baby, brought sense of family, brought family a lot closer.
6. Stepmother having a child.	Far more open to children's feelings, wants, can empathize more, a lot more easy-going. More appreciative of my feelings for children from my first marriage.
7. Drove to the mountains for Joan's ski races, left at three in the morning, came back the same day.	She can relate well to me in terms of how she thinks, feels. I can understand her mentally and emotionally. She realizes I'm still going to make time for her.
8. Insist Joan phones every night after a race or a practise.	Continuous support system for her.
9. The actual remarriage.	She's realized I'll never get back together with her mother. Less uncertainty in her life, less anxiety.
10. Joan came for a visit, walked into house, said "Hi", went straight to baby stepbrother.	She doesn't feel threatened by a new stepbrother any more, has realized she won't be abandoned.
11. Ski holiday with just the four of us - the two kids, myself and their stepmother.	Had lots of fun. Kids helped their step-mother with skiing.

12. Summer holiday with kids. Made them the top priority for the three weeks.	Non-threatening time together. They enjoyed themselves.
13. Established friendship with ex-wife, quite amiable towards each other.	No need to fight. Crucial to Joan.

2.9 CRITICAL INCIDENTS INTERVIEW RESULTS
Biological Mother of Joan (assumed name)
Difficult Incidents - Separation - Divorce Period

Critical Incident	Description of Difficulty
1. Went for a walk - I had to walk right beside her. If I got one step in front of her, she became extremely anxious and very angry. Sat down and screamed.	Worried her mom would leave her. Was angry - blamed mom for separation.
2. The two of us got into the car and left the farm.	She was forced to move away from her favorite place. Loved the outdoors, the animals.
3. Moved into small house, in new town. Talked constantly about hating it.	Resented being distanced from familiar environment, from dad and brother. Saw me as the one who instigated the separation.
4. Wouldn't let me hug or cuddle her, but her dad could.	I was to blame for the separation. I took her away from her father and the place she loved. She was punishing me - in turn, punishing herself.
5. I had a relationship with a man.	Angry that I wanted to be with somebody other than her father. My energy wasn't all hers - I chose to spend time with another person.
6. During first separation, I left and went back to university.	Didn't understand why all of a sudden her mother left her. Felt hurt and abandoned. I was a visiting parent - usually the experience a man has with his children.
7. Argument with her dad over who was going to pay for her skiing.	Experienced the animosity, she was in the middle.
8. Being sent to daycare.	Felt abandoned. Felt separated from both me and her dad.

2.10 CRITICAL INCIDENTS INTERVIEW RESULTS
Biological Mother of Joan (assumed name)
Helpful Incidents - Separation - Divorce Period

Critical Incident	Description of Helpfulness
1. Had regular contact at school with her brother.	Brought them closer together - not a typical brother-sister relationship, more of a friendship.
2. Bought a house in same city as her dad and brother.	Brought her back to familiar contacts. Made it easier to deal with the changes involved in separating as a family.
3. Discovered she could ride bike over to her dad's place from our new home.	Access to dad and brother was easier, she saw a lot more of them. Issues around family falling apart weren't as big - we were sort of in the same environment.
4. Picked out furniture, paint for her new bedroom.	Made it seem like a special place for her. Started inviting more friends over.
5. Both parents strongly involved in her skiing. Went to meetings, were on the hill.	She had something to concentrate on that she was successful at. Saw it as a family effort with no expectations that we'd get back together.
6. She met her brother at the bottom and they rode up the chair lift together.	They chose to be together, enjoyed their time. Gave them a time to connect - missed all the scrapping that goes on in daily existence.
7. We went out for supper as a family for her 11th birthday.	She wasn't getting caught in between ex-husband and ex-wife fights. They could see us together for a positive, pleasant occasion.
8. Took turns having the kids on Christmas day.	Saw her dad and I making the effort to make it work, caring for her, putting the other stuff away.
9. I didn't ask for support payments - did it on my own.	Didn't have typical separation hassles around money. She didn't have to be in the middle.

2.11 CRITICAL INCIDENTS INTERVIEW RESULTS
Biological Mother of Joan (assumed name)
Difficult Incidents - Remarriage Period

Critical Incident	Description of Difficulty
1. Holiday with brother and younger stepbrother.	Lots of fighting among the 3 kids. Had to put up with stepfather in parenting role. Bugged by stepbrother, didn't want a new brother.
2. Having an argument with me - stepfather jumped in and defended me.	Usual way of dealing with conflict didn't work.
3. Grade 9 grad - only given tickets for 2 parents.	Confused as to who is family, who to include, how to decide.
4. Dad's new wife planning her wedding.	Felt usurped in her position with her dad.

2.12 CRITICAL INCIDENTS INTERVIEW RESULTS
Biological Mother of Joan (assumed name)
Helpful Incidents - Remarriage Period

Critical Incident	Description of Helpfulness
1. I came to her brother's birthday party at her dad's and stepmother's place.	She experienced her mom making an effort to be friendly towards her dad and his new wife; animosity wasn't experienced. She wasn't caught in the middle.
2. Stepfather worked on developing a friendship at first - didn't do any disciplining, left that to me.	Didn't have to worry about being parented by an outsider. Helped build a friendship, weren't extra pressures. Parent roles were clearly defined - didn't have to deal with cross-overs, (dad and stepdad) didn't have to choose.
3. Didn't have a formal wedding.	Allowed relationships to develop smoothly and slowly. Didn't have to deal with fact her mother's life had changed - and hers would have to as well.
4. Holiday at the lake for two weeks - just the kids and myself.	An opportunity to be alone together, to integrate old stuff into a new relationship. Maintained their little family.
5. Their dad and I made the decision to stay in the same city - not to consider job moves that would cause a move elsewhere.	Normalized their family as much as possible. Kept access to all family members easy.
6. Went out and bought a puppy with mom, brother and stepfather.	Special occasion to share with mom, brother and stepfather. Glad to have an animal around again.

3.1 CRITICAL INCIDENTS INTERVIEW RESULTS
Teenage Male: Bob (assumed name)
Difficult Incidents - Separation - Divorce Period

Critical Incident	Description of Difficulty
1. Dad came to pick us up, him and mom got in a big fight about money. We ended up staying home.	Didn't understand what was being said. Angry at mom for saying some of the things she said, stuff I hadn't heard before.
2. All of a sudden, they got separated.	Seemed so sudden. They didn't talk about it before; I wasn't aware of the problems.
3. Mom was nagging us to ask our dad for money instead of her.	Awkward to ask dad for money, only saw him once a month. Seemed like she thought we thought she was the bad guy.
4. Dad came for a visit. My sister and I stopped what we were doing and went with him.	Mom got mad. I couldn't understand because we didn't get to see him very much.
5. Father/son hockey game - my dad wasn't around.	Didn't have enough time for dad to plan to be there. Had to get used to the idea of being alone, not having him around as much as I wanted.
6. Mom started dating. Dad had a girlfriend.	Hard to get used to. Different to see them going their own ways.
7. Saying good-bye to dad at the end of a weekend visit.	He got really sad so it was hard to leave. I could tell he was hurting, I worried about him; I didn't see him enough.
8. Dad used to be really involved in my hockey, used to coach, help manage. Mom doesn't care about my hockey, doesn't enjoy it.	Felt alone. Everybody else's dad would help. Seemed like mom didn't care.
9. Spent more time with my friends. No one to play catch with, throw a football with at home.	Got in trouble, came in late a lot. Seemed like I was always getting in trouble in those days.
10. Coat check for hockey, supposed to do it with a parent, I did it alone.	Knew mom didn't like doing it. Missed dad - he was always willing to do that kind of stuff.

11. Dad bought something new. Told us not to tell mom.	Felt 'in the middle'.
12. Mom needed money, asked me to ask dad for her payment.	Felt 'in the middle'.

3.2 CRITICAL INCIDENTS INTERVIEW RESULTS
Teenage Male: Bob (assumed name)
Helpful Incidents - Separation - Divorce Period

Critical Incident	Description of Helpfulness
1. When dad comes down for a visit, we always go to hockey games.	Nice to do things most sons and fathers do.
2. Talked with sister about what was going on.	She knew what was going on, she was there. Easier to talk to her than somebody outside the family.
3. Didn't have to move.	Still had my friends. Parents weren't fighting over custody, didn't have to go to court. Could see dad whenever I wanted, he could see me whenever he wanted.
4. My sister and I told mom we didn't think it was fair to ask us to ask dad for money.	She stopped asking us. We got ourselves 'out of the middle'. Both of us saying it made mom realize what she was doing.
5. Mom came close to marrying another guy. Talked to my sister and I about it - we told her we didn't like him. She didn't marry him.	Told the truth. Felt like our feelings were important.
6. Mostly go to visit dad with my sister at the same time.	Don't have to be alone.

3.3 CRITICAL INCIDENTS INTERVIEW RESULTS
Teenage Male: Bob (assumed name)
Difficult Incidents - Remarriage Period

Critical Incident	Description of Difficulty
1. Mom hadn't told dad yet that she was going to remarry.	Was worried about dad. Thought it might hurt him.
2. Being around dad, he felt he was left out.	Hard being with him, he thought my stepfather was taking his place. Hard getting used to having a live-in dad.
3. Stepfather's really energetic and I'm really laid-back.	Angry that he expected me to change just like that.
4. Mom got married - we moved.	Too far away, took me away from my friends, it hurt.
5. Told mom and stepfather I thought it was rather quick.	Felt dumb but was worried it wouldn't last, didn't want another divorce.
6. With stepfather around, mom is always making supper. We were used to fending for ourselves.	Hard for mom, she's busy and the added pressure on her, more work for her.
7. Dad having trouble with his payments, mom and step-father were talking about adopting me.	I didn't want to be adopted, didn't want to hurt my dad.
8. Mom and stepfather getting married - didn't see much of dad for about 6 months.	Missed seeing him.

3.4 CRITICAL INCIDENTS INTERVIEW RESULTS
Teenage Male: Bob (assumed name)
Helpful Incidents - Remarriage Period

Critical Incident	Description of Helpfulness
1. Mom calls dad, they'll talk for quite a while.	Knew they weren't getting back together but they were at least talking and not arguing.
2. Went on drive with future stepfather, talked about idea of him marrying mom.	I liked him, had no real problems with the idea, I was prepared for it.
3. My sister and I told dad we'd always look at him as our dad. Our stepfather would be like an uncle, sort of.	Dad understood; our relationship with him didn't change, wasn't threatened.
4. With stepfather around, always somebody for everybody to do something with.	Mom had someone to talk to now when my sister and I were together. I had someone to do things with when mom and my sister were busy.
5. Stepfather kept his distance, didn't act like a father, acted more as a friend.	Remarriage clear, mom did the parenting, stepfather stayed in the sidelines.
6. Golfing with stepfather.	Enjoyed having another male around to share my interests with - sports.
7. Stepfather coming on weekends and week nights.	Could gradually adapt to having him around.
8. Mom got married, hard on dad, he might have been expecting they'd get back together.	He knows for sure they're not getting back together. He doesn't have to wait anymore - can go on with his life and maybe get married again himself - mom and dad better friends now.
9. Argument over whether to watch hockey game, mom and sister want to watch something else.	Now it's a tie. I don't feel so left out.
10. Mom's wedding.	Helped realize they weren't going to break up. I felt more secure.
11. Told dad mom and stepfather wanted to adopt me because he wasn't making his payments.	Dad started making his payment. Made me feel good to let him know I still love him even thought stepfather's around.

12. Dad comes down for hockey games, sister's sports activities - for important things.	See dad more now.
13. My girlfriend's parents got divorced. Her uncle and aunt got divorced. My sister's friend's parents are getting divorced. It's happening all over.....	It seems normal. I'm glad ours wasn't as bad as others.

3.5 CRITICAL INCIDENTS INTERVIEW RESULTS
Biological Father of Bob (assumed name)
Difficult Incidents - Separation - Divorce Period

Critical Incident	Description of Difficulty
1. I went to watch Bob play hockey in Calgary. Took him home without coaches permission. Got him home late. Bob was supposed to have phoned his mom.(pg. 18)	Bob was confused, felt bad. He saw me being blamed when it was really his fault. Caught in the middle of an argument between his mom and I. Felt guilty.
2. Wanted to take kids skiing - didn't follow proper procedure. Their mom wouldn't let them go.(pg. 18)	Bob was excited about the trip, disappointed he couldn't go. Was upsetting.
3. Weekend visit - I slept in the basement. Had fight with ex-wife; packed up and left. (pg. 26)	Living in an environment where things were so radically different from one period to the next.
4. Kids reached such a high calibre in their sports activities. (pg. 33)	They have to live in a big centre - can't do it in the small town remote area I live in.

3.6 CRITICAL INCIDENTS INTERVIEW RESULTS
Biological Father of Bob (assumed name)
Helpful Incidents - Separation - Divorce Period

Critical Incident	Description of Helpfulness
1. Time spent visiting with kids was devoted primarily to us being together.	They knew they were cared about.
2. Didn't tell kids or their mom that I was dating.	Too soon for them to deal with new people. Still two main people in their lives. Kept Bob's relationship with me stable, as normal as possible. There was no one else in my life to steal my affection.
3. Sat down with the kids one day, explained the separation using the analogy of an injured animal being cared for, healed, and then wanting freedom. It can't be forced to stay.	At their particular ages, it made it easier for them to relate to, to understand what was happening and to deal with it. They're very outdoors.
4. I decided not to argue over custody, not to fight in court. (pg. 24)	Didn't make things more difficult for Bob. Gave him something stable. Didn't get caught in the middle.
5. Fight with ex-wife. I left, she sent one of the kids to bring me back. Everybody was in tears when I got back. (pg. 27)	Expressed emotions. Cleared the air, got things back on track.

3.7 CRITICAL INCIDENTS INTERVIEW RESULTS
Biological Father of Bob (assumed name)
Difficult Incidents - Remarriage Period

Critical Incident	Description of Difficulty
1. Call from ex-wife, Bob wasn't listening well to his stepfather, didn't respect his advice or athletics. (pg. 24)	Didn't want somebody to replace his dad. Didn't accept new image so clung to old one.

3.8 CRITICAL INCIDENTS INTERVIEW RESULTS
Biological Father of Bob (assumed name)
Helpful Incidents - Remarriage Period

Critical Incident	Description of Helpfulness
1. Bob spent the summer with me last year. First time he ever defied his mother. (pg. 28)	Made our relationship stronger. Bob did what he wanted to do, stuck to it.
2. Bob came for a two week visit. (pg. 29)	Enjoyed the time together. Did the same things that always happened after the separation and the divorce, and through the next marriage.
3. Bob planning to live with me this summer, has a good paying job in the area I live in. (pg. 29)	Allows a good time for us to be together.
4. I was leaving after one of my weekend visits. Bob's sister always gave me a hug; he never did. This particular time he did. (pg. 30)	Realized there is still a good, strong relationship there.
5. Bob and I went on a trip with my girlfriend at Easter.	Had a really good time. Shows things really haven't changed.
6. Bob, his sister and I going rock climbing together, being goofy.	Bob gets to be a kid again. Time with his mom, he's an adult. Times like this are play - a time to release.
7. I went out of my way to drive the bus on the weekends for Bob's hockey tournaments. (pg. 32)	Bob gets a lot of my time, more so than his sister. My background is strong in the area he's interested in.
8. Bob not getting the encouragement he needs from his hockey coaches. Not getting it at home - told to try something - try basketball. (pg. 34)	Bob's at the point that he needs to decide for himself. Knows he'll get all the support he needs but he makes the decision.
9. Bob got benched at hockey. His mom phoned me; she was going to phone the coach and embarass him. I flew out of the north and spent a weekend. (pg. 35)	Bob needs to decide for himself what he wants. Dad remains important, involved in his life.

10. I'm going to Victoria this summer to watch Bob play hockey. He phoned me and asked if I'd go. I said "sure". (pg. 39)

He's at a crossroads that he needs a push. I'll be there to do that. He's more comfortable with me doing that in hockey than his mom.

11. I don't ask the kids to leave their mom and live with me. (pg. 40)

Not fair. Too hard of a choice for them. Too much guilt that way, doesn't become a competitive thing.

12. I don't pressure the kids to see me. It's their choice, if they're busy doing something else - it's not a big deal. (pg. 41)

They don't have to make sacrifices to be with me.

3.9 CRITICAL INCIDENTS INTERVIEW RESULTS
Biological Mother of Bob (assumed name)
Difficult Incidents - Separation - Divorce Period

Critical Incident	Description of Difficulty
1. The night I told the kids their dad and I were separating. They were crying and sobbing. (pg. 1)	Hard to accept - hurt.
2. We moved to a new city. Bob wouldn't go out; his sister and I did. (pg. 2)	He was worried about me, was staying home to look after me, he had to be the man now.
3. Bob's dad came and stayed with us. Thought maybe we could put the marriage back together. Didn't work - he moved. (pg. 5)	Thought there was a chance his dad would be back and then he wasn't.
4. Out driving in the country, I wanted to stop and have a weiner roast. Kids refused. (pg. 6)	Scared. Didn't see me as strong enough. Felt there needed to be a man around sometimes.
5. Bob tried out for a baseball team and couldn't hit the ball. I couldn't help him.(pg. 6)	Bob needed help in an area I have very poor skills in (athletics). Dad always provided that knowledge.
6. I split up with a fellow I had been dating. (pg. 7)	Bob missed having a real male influence in his life.
7. Bob's dad and I fighting about money. (pg. 8)	Bob felt torn.
8. Bob's dad came for visit - stayed in hotel room, they had to find things to do. (pg. 10)	Disappointed there wasn't more contact with his dad. Couldn't just be together as a family anymore, almost a formal situation just to see his dad.
9. Bob lost his paternal grandparents. No involvement on their part other than buying presents. (pg. 11)	Felt abandoned, alone.
10. Bob would want to go hunting or fishing. (pg. 15)	Missed having a man around to do male kind of things. I had no interest in them.

11. Bob said, "if you're going to get punished, get mom to ground you - she forgets in two days." (pg. 16)	Missed out some discipline.
12. I wasn't thrilled about hockey. Resented spending 5 hours a weekend at the rink.	Bob didn't have the same kind of support as the other kids.
13. Bob didn't like men coming in and out. (pg. 19)	He felt he had to be nice, but really didn't care.
14. Bob's first year in new school - low marks. School thought he was a slow learner. (pg. 21)	He was upset - a hard adjustment emotionally.
15. I was hospitalized for asthma - Bob's marks dropped. (pg. 23)	He was worried and concerned. Feared the loss of the prime person in his life - already lost his dad.

3.10 CRITICAL INCIDENTS INTERVIEW RESULTS
Biological Mother of Bob (assumed name)
Helpful Incidents - Separation - Divorce Period

Critical Incident	Description of Helpfulness
1. Bob had friends who had same sort of thing happen. (pg. 2)	He already had something of an understanding.
2. Bob and I used to bike riding together. (pg. 6)	Spent a lot of time together - were pretty close.
3. Went to school counsellor, arranged to have one of the male teachers keep an eye out for Bob. (pg. 7)	Bob gained a buddy. They enjoyed doing things together.
4. I was bound and determined that both Bob's dad and I would still be in his life. (pg. 10)	I didn't get in the way of Bob seeing his dad. Less resentment - Bob needed his dad.
5. Called Bob's dad for advice on hockey.	Kept Bob and his dad connected. His dad went to a lot of his games.
6. Bob's dad lived in same city as us one winter - drove the bus for Bob's hockey team.	Parental support was important to Bob. He could still be "proud" that this was my dad".
7. Bob's maternal grandparents made a special point of having the kids down for summer holidays. (pg. 11)	Strengthened his extended family. Knew there was somebody else that cared, that he wasn't just all alone.
8. Bob and his sister in same school - watch out for each other. (pg. 13)	Really strong support for each other.
9. Bob did a lot of cooking and laundry. Learned who to call in case of a problem. (pg. 13)	Became more independent, learned to rely on himself and his sister.
10. Moved to a smaller city. I promised we wouldn't move until the kids finished high school. (pg. 21)	Stability in his life, had moved around a lot when we lived with his dad.
11. Bob earned a reputation in new community as a good athlete. (pg. 21)	Gained a positive identity - lots of recognition. Bob felt good about himself.

12. We had an income that supported us comfortably. (pg. 22)	Able to live in a good neighborhood. Bob saw us as being okay as a family. He didn't feel worried or embarrassed. Didn't have to do without things. Able to continue in hockey without worrying about affording it.
13. Bob observed his mom going through personal struggles. (pg. 23)	Understands women better. He will make a much better partner.
14. We had Bob's dad with us every Christmas. (pg. 25, 26)	Bob could experience a family tradition being maintained even though his dad and I were apart. Weren't different from other families. Could see his dad and I could still be friends.
15. Bob's dad was gone a lot before the separation/ divorce.	He was used to it being just the 3 of us.
16. Bob's dad didn't get involved in a relationship with another woman for a long time. (pg. 30)	Wasn't torn between two moms. Had lots of time to adjust to their dad being involved in a strong relationship.
17. Bob's dad always maintained if I needed him, he'll be there. Up until meeting my new husband, he's been my best friend. (pg. 31)	Established a real constant for Bob. Always knew someone was there that cared, someone he could fall back on.

3.11 CRITICAL INCIDENTS INTERVIEW RESULTS
Biological Mother of Bob (assumed name)
Difficult Incidents - Remarriage Period

Critical Incident	Description of Difficulty
1. Bob holding his feelings inside - not arguing when he disagrees. (pg. 36)	He had been the man in the family. Was confused - part of him threatened by having a stepfather around, another part glad to be relieved of the responsibility.
2. Encouraged Bob to call his stepfather "Dad". It didn't work. Stepfather wanted desperately to be called dad. (pg. 39)	Confused - Bob wanted a clear differentiation between his biological father and his stepfather. Expected too much of Bob.
3. Bob was real laid back; his stepfather's a real go-go and vital. One day Bob said, "I don't want to be that busy. He expects too much." (pg. 40)	Engergies and personalities clashed. Hard for Bob to adjust to being around such a different kind of person.
4. Stepfather and I went away for weekend alone. Bob and his sister didn't do their homework, weren't contributing to the family.	Felt a loss, felt neglected - upset. Felt I wasn't spending enough time with him. Wasn't getting enough attention - wasn't the only man in my life anymore.

3.12 CRITICAL INCIDENTS INTERVIEW RESULTS
Biological Mother of Bob (assumed name)
Helpful Incidents - Remarriage Period

Critical Incident	Description of Helpfulness
1. Bob's dad is really laid back. His new dad is a real go-getter. (pg. 11)	Bob has two role models to follow instead of one. Can see strengths in both men.
2. Bob and his sister apart for the summer. Called each other back and forth.	Boost each other, look after each other. Maintain their closeness, their friendship.
3. I made it very clear with stepfather that if the kids were to get heck for anything, it was to come from me. (pg. 17)	Able to develop the new stepparent relationship carefully, more smoothly.
4. The three of us chose my new husband - not just me. (pg. 29)	We work really well as a family. Bob knew he played an important role in the decision to marry, knew he was a priority. He had some choice.
5. Drove to pick up Bob's sister, had to miss day of work. (pg. 32)	Bob knows that he and his sister are top priority, always come first - no matter what. Really carried them through - knowing how important they are.
6. Sat down and talked with Bob and sister about getting married. (pg. 34)	Happy about it - liked their future stepfather.
7. Involved Bob and his sister in the wedding. They gave me away; they took vows. The four of us got married. (pg. 35)	Bob enjoyed the ceremony, had a good day, had fun. Was glad to see all his relatives.
8. Bob and stepfather got mad, had an argument about household duties. (pg. 36)	Healthy release - communication. Bob used to hold his negative feelings inside.
9. Stepfather gets up in morning, takes Bob to hockey. Goes hunting and golfing with him. (pg. 36)	Bob knows there's a man that likes him and is there for him.
10. Bob had to fill out form. Had to put in parents names - now puts in his dad, me and stepfather. (pg. 38)	Sees himself as having 3 parents. Accepts stepfather as part of his family.

11. Stepfather and myself going away by ourselves for weekend. (pg. 42)	Bob became less attached to me. Easier for him to individuate, become more independent.
12. Stepfather had a car Bob really liked. Entered into a better financial position. (pg. 42)	Bob liked cars - materialistically better off as a family, able to afford more.